



**Annual Report  
1996-97**



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## Annual Report 1996-97

Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Canberra

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The Honourable Peter Costello, MP  
Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia

In accordance with the provisions of section 24(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, I hereby submit to you, for presentation to the Parliament, this report on the operations of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended 30 June 1997.

This report complies with 'Requirements for Departmental Annual Reports' approved by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts under subsection 25(7) of the *Public Service Act 1922*.

The report is dated on the day I approved the finalised text for printing.



W. McLennan  
Australian Statistician

2 October 1997

## **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

### **Mission**

*We assist and encourage informed decision-making,  
research and discussion within governments and  
the community, by providing a high quality,  
objective and responsive national statistical service.*

## **Australian Bureau of Statistics Corporate Plan 1994**

### **Objectives**

#### **Purpose**

*Informed and satisfied clients through an objective, relevant and responsive statistical service.*

#### **Product**

*Reliable, timely and coherent statistics.*

#### **Providers**

*Good relations with providers, respecting their rights.*

#### **People**

*A team of people with the skills and motivation to achieve the ABS mission.*

#### **Productivity**

*Continuing productivity improvements.*

#### **Profile**

*A high regard held for the ABS by decision makers and the community.*



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#### **Note**

After the first reference in this report, the Australian Bureau of Statistics is generally referred to as the Bureau or the ABS, and the Australian Statistics Advisory Council as the Advisory Council or ASAC.

#### **Where to get information**

*For any inquiries about the contents of this report, or to obtain 'Information on Request' documents (listed in Appendix 14), please contact: Director, ABS Secretariat, PO Box 10, Belconnen, ACT 2616. Telephone (02) 6252 5760. Facsimile (02) 6252 8017.*

This report, guides to ABS services, other selected documents, and a range of ABS statistics, are available electronically on the ABS's homepage service on the Internet (<http://www.abs.gov.au>).

# 1 ABS — INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's official statistical agency. It provides statistics on a wide range of economic and social matters, covering government, business and the population in general. It also has an important coordination function with respect to the statistical activities of other official bodies.

For Commonwealth Government program budgeting purposes, the ABS is a single program comprising two sub-programs — Statistical Operations and Corporate Services. Internally, the ABS program is broken into 54 components. These components, which cover ABS collection activities as well as the various support functions, are listed in Appendix 1. Chapters 4 and 5 of this report provide an account of the activities and achievements of each component.

The ABS has a Central Office in Canberra and eight regional offices — one in each State and Territory capital city. The ABS is headed by the Australian Statistician — a statutory office. Appendix 2 provides details of the senior management structure which supports the Australian Statistician.

The remainder of this chapter provides overview information about the ABS. Chapter 2 discusses the significant developments in the ABS work program over the past eight years. Chapter 3 provides an account of the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, which established high standards of quality and timeliness. ABS financial statements are in Appendix 15.

## AUTHORITY AND LEGISLATION

The principal legislation determining the functions and responsibilities of the ABS are the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The functions of the ABS are defined in section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* as follows:

- “(a) to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and, by arrangements with the Governments of the States, provide statistical services for those Governments;
- (b) to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;
- (c) to ensure co-ordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information, with particular regard to —
  - (i) the avoidance of duplication in the collection by official bodies of information for statistical purposes;

- (ii) the attainment of compatibility between, and the integration of, statistics compiled by official bodies; and
- (iii) the maximum possible utilisation, for statistical purposes, of information, and means of collection of information, available to official bodies;
- (d) to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes;
- (e) to provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics; and
- (f) to provide liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organisations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters."

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* also established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC). Subsection 18 (1) of the Act specifies that the functions of the Advisory Council are to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to —

- "(a) the improvement, extension and co-ordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia;
- (b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services; and
- (c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services."

## ROLE AND OPERATION

The mission of the ABS is to assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by providing a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

The Australian Statistician determines which statistics are to be collected, after full discussion with users and clients including ASAC, and makes the results widely available. The independent status of the Australian Statistician is specified in law, and the ABS has always received strong Parliamentary and community support.

In releasing statistics, the ABS follows the long-established principles that data should be made available as soon as is practicable and should be equally available to all users. In addition to traditional paper publications, a large range of products is available electronically.

In recognition of the importance of free and ready access to statistics for the community generally, a large core set of statistics is made available through 529 public, technical and tertiary libraries across Australia. Complimentary copies of ABS publications are provided to



members of parliament and to major news media organisations. The principal results from these publications are highlighted daily in the print and electronic media.

In order to produce official statistics, the ABS undertakes a large number of separate collections, ranging from periodic censuses to regular surveys of industry to provide current economic indicators, and from the five-yearly Population Census to regular household surveys on specific social or economic issues. The ABS devotes considerable efforts, in close co-operation with Commonwealth, State and Territory administrative agencies, to producing statistics as a by-product of administrative systems.

The ABS continually assesses user requirements and the capacity of providers to furnish data in collections. The ABS maintains ongoing contact with providers and users of data through means such as standing committees, user groups, outposted statistical officer and consultancy services, conferences and seminars of representative organisations, and through day-to-day contact in the course of collecting and disseminating data.

ASAC plays an active role in advising upon the direction and priorities of the ABS work program. The activities of the Council are described in its annual report to Parliament. During 1996–97, seven new members (including two women) were appointed to ASAC. Five members retired or resigned.

Under the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, Commonwealth and State statistical services have been integrated in all States since 1958 (in Tasmania since 1924). Although not covered by the Act, similar arrangements apply in both Territories. In Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, the Regional Director administering the ABS Office is also the State Government Statistician. A government statistical coordination and consultative mechanism operates in most States and Territories. There is regular consultation with State Governments on statistical priorities.

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

During 1996–97 the ABS continued to provide a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service. The more significant performance highlights are summarised below.

### Information Products

New publication releases during the year included:

- *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (ABS Cat. no. 4704.0), a joint publication with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, which was launched by the Governor-General, Sir William Deane, at a ceremony in Darwin in April 1997.
- *Women's Safety, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4128.0).

- *Aspects of Literacy: Profiles and Perceptions, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4226.0).
- A number of new publications about service industries, including *Sports Industries, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8686.0), *Recreation Services, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8688.0), *Gambling Industries, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8684.0), *Private Medical Practice Industry, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8685.0), *Clubs, Pubs, Taverns and Bars, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8687.0) and *Radio and Television Services, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8680.0).
- *Australians' Employment and Unemployment Patterns, Jobseekers* (ABS Cat. no. 6286.0), which contained the first results from the longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns.
- *Energy Accounts for Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4604.0), which contained the first resource accounts.
- *Australian Agriculture and the Environment* (ABS Cat. no. 4606.0), which explored issues associated with Australian agriculture.
- Two new compendium publications, *Agriculture, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 7113.0) and *Motor Vehicles in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 9311.0).
- *Small and Medium Enterprises, Business Growth and Performance Survey, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8141.0), which contained the first results from a longitudinal survey of small- and medium-sized businesses.
- Further releases from the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey, including *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Social Atlas* (ABS Cat. no. 4155.0) and *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland* (ABS Cat. no. 4179.3).
- *1995 National Health Survey: First Results* (ABS Cat. no. 4392.0).
- *Firearms Deaths, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4397.0).
- *Government Information Technology, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8119.0).
- *Information Technology, Australia, 1995-96, Preliminary* (ABS Cat. no. 8143.0).

Some other notable releases during the year were:

- The 1997 edition of *Year Book, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 1301.0), which contained feature articles on government redistribution of income in Australia, women in small business, household adoption of digital technologies, understanding the innovation process in manufacturing and natural resources in national balance sheets.

- *Australian Social Trends*, fourth edition (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0), which included a new chapter on crime and justice.
- *Australian Women's Year Book*, third edition (ABS Cat. no. 4124.0).
- *Education and Training in Australia*, second edition (ABS Cat. no. 4224.0), a major compendium publication.
- The December 1996 issue of *Australian Demographic Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 3101.0) which included the first release of 1996 Census-based population estimates.

There were also some important releases of electronic products which included:

- An upgraded ABS Internet Website (<http://www.abs.gov.au>) based on Lotus Domino.
- *Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, Australia: Confidentialised Unit Record File* (ABS Cat. no. 4431.0.15.0).
- *Income and Housing Costs Survey, Australia: Confidentialised Unit Record File* (ABS Cat. no. 6541.0.15.0).

#### Statistical Developments

The 1996 Census of Population and Housing, held on 6 August 1996, was successfully conducted with very high levels of public cooperation. Significant improvements were achieved in the quality of the population count. The post enumeration survey conducted after the Census indicated an under-enumeration rate of 1.6%, the lowest rate ever achieved since such surveys have been used to assess completeness of population counts. Processing of the Census was well ahead of schedule and the majority of 1996 Census data were released in July 1997, less than a year after the Census. At \$7.60 per person, the cost of the 1996 Census, adjusted for inflation, was 2.3% less than that for the 1991 Census and 3.9% less than that for the 1986 Census. The conduct of the 1996 Census was at the forefront of world best practice.

The Census results also showed an improvement in the accuracy of Australian and State/Territory preliminary population estimates. The intercensal discrepancy, defined as the difference between the estimated resident populations based on 1996 Census results and those based on the 1991 Census results, was reduced to an unprecedented low level of 0.1% (underestimation) compared with 0.3% (overestimation) five years earlier. The mean State/Territory intercensal discrepancy also fell, from 1.2 to 0.5%.

A detailed report on the 1996 Census is presented in Chapter 3.

A number of new household surveys were completed or commenced in 1996-97, including a survey of mental health and wellbeing, a nutrition survey, a survey of aspects of literacy and the second phase of a longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns.

This was in addition to the extensive range of social and labour surveys which are conducted at regular intervals. Significant cost savings were achieved from the introduction of telephone interviewing techniques, with no discernible effect on data quality, in the monthly labour force survey which provides Australia's official measures of employment and unemployment.

A major review of the Australian Consumer Price Index commenced in 1996-97. The review was accompanied by the issue of an information paper *Issues to be Considered During the 13th Series Australian Consumer Price Index Review* (ABS Cat. no. 6451.0), which invited public submissions. Public seminars were conducted in all States. An information paper *An Analytical Framework for Price Indexes in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6421.0), which proposes the repositioning of price indexes into a coherent framework as well as the development of new inflation measures, was also released in 1996-97.

In addition to a repeat of a previously conducted survey of selected business services, a new service industries survey in respect of the community services industry was conducted during 1996-97. Both surveys were conducted in respect of 1995-96. Also during 1996-97, new surveys of the waste management and cultural industries (to be conducted in respect of 1996-97) were developed.

Following the release of two information papers on monthly balance of payments statistics, and after consultation with users, the ABS decided that the monthly balance of payments publication be discontinued after the December 1996 issue. It was replaced with a new monthly publication *International Trade in Goods and Services* (ABS Cat. no. 5368.0).

A number of proposed changes to government finance statistics, the most significant being a shift from a cash to an accrual basis of reporting, were announced in the information paper *Developments in Government Finance Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 5516.0).

Other notable statistical developments during 1996-97 included:

- The commencement of the first phase of the survey to collect wage cost data for the new labour cost index.
- Investigations into the development of tourism satellite accounts.
- Development of a construction industry survey to be conducted in respect of 1996-97.

#### Infrastructure and Coordination

The ABS continued to invest in infrastructure such as computing facilities, conceptual frameworks and classifications, the register of businesses (which provides the basis for the ABS's wide range of business based surveys), and a corresponding population survey framework which supports household surveys.

The ABS also continued to focus on coordinating its activities with those of other agencies, and on minimising the reporting burden being placed on data providers.

Some developments during 1996–97 in infrastructure and coordination aspects of the ABS's operations were:

- Release of *Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups* (ABS Cat. no. 1266.0) and *Australian Standard Classification of Languages* (ABS Cat. no. 1267.0).
- Development of an external gateway for electronic communication. As a first for a Commonwealth agency, the ABS received Defence Signals Directorate endorsement for the gateway.
- Commissioning and operation of systems for processing of the 1996 Census of Population and Housing.
- Substantial enhancements to the ABS Information Warehouse software, allowing the decommissioning of legacy systems.
- Production release of the ABS's knowledge-based seasonal analysis system allowing adjustment and trending of time series in the ABS Information Warehouse.
- In collaboration with the Public Sector Mapping Agencies, the development of the first seamless digital mapbase for Australia, for use in geographical information systems and the dissemination of geography statistics.
- Signing of memorandums of understanding with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), on the ABS use of ATO data, and the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC), on arrangements for the integrated collection of data from government finance statistics and the CGC standard budget.
- A 17% reduction in the provider load imposed on business, and the commencement of the development of a statistical clearance process for business collections conducted by Commonwealth Government agencies. Both of these initiatives were associated with recommendations of the Commonwealth Government's Small Business Deregulation Task Force. Further information on provider load is available later in this chapter.
- Establishment of new high level user advisory groups in the areas of economic statistics, labour statistics and statistical methodology.
- The appointment of the Australian Statistician, Mr Bill McLennan, as the non-judicial member of the Australian Electoral Commission.



*Australian Statistician, Bill McLennan and the Commissioner of Taxation, Michael Carmody, sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the ABS and ATO on 19 December 1996.*

## International involvement

The ABS is widely acknowledged to be an important and active member of the international statistical community. Highlights of this involvement in 1996–97 included:

- Election, in May 1997, of Australia to the United Nations Statistical Commission for the period 1998–2001. Australia's representative to the Commission will be the Australian Statistician, Mr Bill McLennan.
- Election of Mr Tim Skinner, the Deputy Australian Statistician, Population Statistics, as Chair of the Governing Board of the Statistical Institute of Asia and the Pacific, a body set up by the United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific for the training of statisticians in member countries.
- An international conference on capital stock estimates, hosted by the ABS in March 1997.
- An inaugural meeting of the Canberra Group, an international forum for experts in household income measurement, convened by ABS in December 1996.
- Provision of substantial support to South Africa in the fields of population census, economic statistics and social statistics, as well as continued statistical support to other countries, mostly in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Management

Notable developments during 1996–97 included the following:

- Preparations for the implementation of the *Workplace Relations Act* which will change the ABS's employment conditions framework.
- Completion by the Australian National Audit Office of a performance audit of the 1996 Census. The overall conclusion was that the part of the 1996 Census cycle completed up to the time the audit was conducted (including the development and collection phases and a large part of the processing phase) had been generally carried out efficiently and effectively by the ABS.
- Introduction of the ABS Leadership Program, developed in partnership with the Australian Graduate School of Management, as a flagship program for potential leaders of the ABS.
- Introduction of the ABS Graduate Certificate in Management, a senior management program developed in partnership with, and primarily conducted by, the University of Canberra.
- Introduction of external service providers for the internal audit program.



*The ABS signed an agreement with the University of Canberra, which will conduct the major part of the ABS Graduate Certificate in Management.*

*Standing from left are: Mike Kulmar and Milan Bhattacharjee (both ABS), Sherrie Corrie, Jim McMaster and Mark Turner (all University of Canberra).  
Sitting from left are: John Dent (ABS), Professor Don Aitkin, (Vice Chancellor University of Canberra) and Graham Wauchop (ABS).*



## IMPACT OF THE 1997-98 BUDGET ON THE ABS

The 1997-98 Commonwealth Budget, brought down on 13 May 1997, contained several measures directly impacting on the ABS. The Budget measures included:

- A reduction of \$5.1 million per annum in running costs for the ABS work program, in lieu of an extra 2% efficiency dividend which was applied to other agencies.
- The application of a 1% efficiency dividend (which had already been taken into account in the ABS forward work program).
- A requirement on the ABS to raise an additional \$2 million in revenue each year.
- Additional funding of \$0.6 million per annum for ABS activities arising from the recommendations of the Small Business Deregulation Task Force.

Even though the reduction in running costs in percentage terms was not large, over the previous two Budgets the ABS had absorbed reductions in running costs approaching 10%. For this reason, the reductions in the 1997-98 Budget could not be absorbed without reductions in the work program.

In identifying options for reducing the ABS's work program, a number of considerations were taken into account. First, account was taken of how resources are currently being spent, particularly in the areas of significant expenditure. Second, all work where the statistical impact of a reduction would be the least was considered carefully. Third, all full census collections were examined to see if sampling or other techniques might be used to cut costs without unduly reducing the usefulness of the statistical output.

The following changes were made to the ABS work program:

- The quarterly survey of tourist accommodation will be reduced from a census to a sample thus bringing the treatment of this sector into line with other sectors. National and State estimates will be available, as will broad data at the regional level. However, the very detailed statistical local area data will be discontinued.
- The compilation and publication of the quarterly State accounts will be discontinued but annual State accounts will continue to be compiled and published. The final quarterly State account publication will be issued with respect to the June quarter 1997.
- The agricultural census will be run as a large sample survey in four out of five years with a full census every fifth year. A comprehensive set of data will still be collected each year but in the non-census years there will be a loss of detailed small area data. Implementation will commence from the 1997-98 collection.

- The industry statistics program will be downsized with savings made across the whole industry statistics program in order to minimise the impact on statistics of the emerging and growing services sector.
- The frequency of producer prices indexes will be reduced from monthly to quarterly, thereby putting the statistics on the same frequency as the consumer price index.

In addition to the reductions in the work program, the reimbursement to State Treasuries of money spent by State Government agencies on the purchase of ABS products and services was discontinued from 1 July 1997.

The above measures are insufficient to meet the required \$5.1 million reduction in appropriations for the 1997-98 financial year. The remaining portion of the reduction, about \$1.7 million, will be met through savings from general efficiency measures. This will not have an additional impact on the ABS's work program.

The ABS expects that the requirement for an additional \$2 million in net revenue will be met by:

- More targeted promotion of existing products and services.
- The development of new products and services.
- Continued cost reduction in service delivery.
- Increased prices, where appropriate.
- A more rigorous application of charges by all areas providing services to clients.

After the Budget was brought down, a program of discussions commenced with major key users (primarily User Advisory Groups) to determine exactly how these changes will be implemented.

The bulk of the additional funding received to undertake work arising from recommendations arising from the Small Business Deregulation Task Force was allocated to establish a statistical clearing house of Commonwealth Government collections of businesses. The clearing house will start in about October 1997 and will operate within the Methodology Division. The ABS was also allocated funding to participate in a working party established to develop an overall framework to provide for a single entry point for businesses to register with and provide information to a range of government bodies.

## PROVIDER LOAD

In May 1996, the Government established the Small Business Deregulation Task Force to review the compliance and paper burden imposed on small business. In its Terms of Reference, the Task Force was specifically asked to look at, among other things, statistical collections. In announcing the establishment of the Task Force, the Prime Minister stated:

*"As a downpayment on the work of the Task Force, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has guaranteed to reduce the cost to small business of completing statistical returns by 20% and in doing so minimise the number of occasions small businesses are involved in more than one ABS collection. This is a significant initiative which will not undermine the quality of national economic statistics and the ABS will play an active role in the work of the Task Force."*

An ABS officer was seconded to the Task Force secretariat.

The ABS submission to the Task Force argued that statistics are perceived as a much greater contributor to paperwork than is actually the case. Nevertheless, the submission outlined several measures that were in place to minimise provider load, and suggested some possible additional measures. A copy of the ABS submission is available on request.

The Task Force released its report, *Time for Business*, in November 1996. The report noted that a study, commissioned by the Task Force, had found that statistics accounted for around 1% of the total time small business spent on paper and compliance work.

The Task Force's report noted the ABS's commitment to a 20% reduction in provider load, and contained a number of recommendations relating to statistics. Of these, the more significant were:

- That statistical collections affecting 50 or more businesses and run by, or on behalf of, all Commonwealth Government departments and agencies be subject to a central clearing process, conducted by the ABS, implemented from 1 July 1997.
- That a mechanism for collecting the most commonly sought information from small business and distributing it within government through a single entry point be established by 1 July 1997.

The Government, in its response released on 24 March, essentially accepted all of the recommendations relating to statistics.

Appendix 17 lists the Task Force's recommendations relating to statistics, the Government's response to these recommendations, and the progress made by the ABS during 1996-97.

The table below shows provider load (measured in thousands of hours taken to complete statistical forms) imposed by the ABS on businesses in 1995-96 and 1996-97.

**PROVIDER LOAD IMPOSED ON BUSINESSES BY ABS**  
(hours '000)

	1995-96	1996-97	% change
All businesses	642	604	-5.8
Small businesses(a)	321	265	17.4
Other businesses	321	339	5.6

(a) Defined as business with less than 20 employees

Overall, the provider load imposed by the ABS fell by almost 6% during 1996-97. The load imposed on small businesses fell by 17.4%. This was less than the 20% "downpayment" announced when the Small Business Deregulation Task Force was established because, at the request of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the ABS agreed to defer the introduction of proposed changes to the survey of tourist accommodation pending further user consultation.

While the reduction in provider load during 1996-97 had little impact on the key economic indicators, it did affect the level of detail available for some statistical series. This attracted significant criticism from some users.

The prospects for achieving further reductions in provider load in 1997-98 are good, especially in light of the changes to the ABS work program that will result from measures announced in the 1997 Commonwealth Budget.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

1996-97 is the fourth year that the ABS has compiled its financial statements on an accrual basis. These financial statements can be found at Appendix 15.

The 1996-97 operating expenses of the ABS totalled \$327 million, compared with \$257 million in 1995-96.

Revenue in 1996-97 from the sale of statistical products and provision of services totalled \$23.6 million, a decrease of \$1.9 million on the figure achieved in 1995-96.

A summary of the appropriations to the ABS and the program outlays, as estimated at the presentation of the 1996-97 Commonwealth Budget (updated by the Additional Estimates and Advance to the Minister for Finance), is shown in the table below.

# **RECONCILIATION OF SUB-PROGRAMS AND BUDGET APPROPRIATION(a) ELEMENTS FOR 1996-97 (\$'000)**

	A	+B	+C	+D	=E	- F	=G
Sub-program	Approp. Acts No.s 1 & 3	Approp. Acts No.s 2 & 4	Special Approps	Annotated Approps(b)	Budget Program Approps	Adjust- ments(c)	Budget Program Outlays
Statistical Operations	276 214	595	0	23 700	300 509	23 700	276 809
Corporate Services	26 147	200	0	300	26 647	350	26 297
<b>Total</b>	<b>302 361</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24 000</b>	<b>327 156</b>	<b>24 050</b>	<b>303 106</b>

(a) As at presentation of the 1996-97 Commonwealth Budget, updated by Additional Estimates and Advance to the Minister for Finance.

(b) Annotated Appropriations are a form of special appropriations to allow an agency access to the money it earns.

(c) Adjustments include receipts which are offset against outlays. ABS receipts include miscellaneous receipts which are not eligible for consideration as Annotated Appropriations.

## **FINANCIAL AND STAFFING RESOURCES SUMMARY**

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
<b>ACCRUAL BASIS (\$'000)</b>			
Expenses			
Employee expenses	142 455	153 552	185 593
Other administrative expenses	86 319	103 096	141 337
Total expenses	228 774	256 648	326 930
Revenue (including administered revenue)	22 283	25 537	23 657
Total assets	44 848	73 429	72 971
Total liabilities	61 558	68 549	71 646
<b>Staff years</b>			
<b>TOTAL STAFFING(a)</b>	<b>3 237</b>	<b>3 227</b>	<b>3 978</b>

(a) Full-time staff, and full-time equivalent of part-time staff. Includes paid inoperative staff. Further details on staffing are provided at Appendix 3, Table 3.1.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

At 30 June 1997 the ABS employed 4084 staff under the *Public Service Act 1922*. For the year 1996-97 as a whole, 3,978 staff years were provided. In addition, 1,522 staff years of service were provided in 1996-97 by persons (mostly household survey interviewers and Census collectors) appointed under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The ABS operates through a Central Office in Canberra and eight Regional Offices. A separate Data Processing Centre was established in Sydney to undertake the processing operations of the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing conducted in August 1996. Processing for the 1996 Census commenced in September 1996 and was completed on 31 July 1997.

The average number of paid staff for each office over the last three years is shown in the following table.

**DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF (average paid staff over the year(a))**

Office	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
<b>Operative staff</b>			
Central Office (Canberra)	1 597	1 533	1 608
New South Wales	366	352	350
Victoria	327	345	330
Queensland	252	247	238
Western Australia	232	232	234
South Australia	178	185	196
Tasmania	134	142	146
Northern Territory	50	59	58
Australian Capital Territory Office	7	11	11
Population Census			
Data Processing Centre (NSW)	0	37	728
<b>Total operative staff</b>	<b>3 143</b>	<b>3 143</b>	<b>3 899</b>
<b>Paid inoperative staff(b)</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Total average paid staff</b>	<b>3 237</b>	<b>3 227</b>	<b>3 978</b>

(a) Comprises full-time staff and part-time staff at full-time equivalent. Excludes unpaid inoperative staff. More detailed information is available in Appendix 3, Table 3.1.

(b) For example, staff on approved leave for periods of twelve weeks or longer.

At 30 June 1997 there were 33 operative substantive Senior Executive Service officers in the ABS. Further details of the ABS senior staffing responsibilities are shown in Appendix 2.

Appendix 3 provides a range of information on ABS staffing, including information on classifications, location, representation of EEO groups and intake and separations.

## PLANNING

The provision of an effective and efficient national statistical service is a complex management exercise because of the diverse nature of user requirements. While the ABS recognises that it is impossible to satisfy all demands, it seeks to react positively and responsibly to the needs of its users. At the same time, the ABS is conscious of the constraints on public spending and on the workload placed on providers of information for its collections. Continued effort is made to review, and where possible, reduce provider load.

The latest ABS Corporate Plan (released in 1994-95) reaffirms ABS commitment to providing high quality, objective and responsive statistical services to governments and the community.

The ABS maintains a three-year forward work program, which is 'rolled forward' by one year each year. The program is based on the set of components described in Chapters 4 and 5. Work programs are developed, resources are allocated and performance indicators are established at these and lower levels.

Each year, relative priorities and competing resource requirements of all program components are formally and extensively considered by senior management. Particular attention is given to:

- The extent to which particular statistical activities continue to be justified vis-à-vis other work for which a demand has been expressed by users.
- The cost imposed on respondents to collections, in terms of time, effort and loss of privacy.
- Prospective total resources available to the Bureau within the three-year period.
- The market potential and revenue implications of the various initiatives proposed.
- Productivity gains which have been achieved or which might be possible in the future.
- Total demands on the service areas which the proposed forward work program would entail.

Proposals from managers of program components are considered by senior management, generally following consultation with major users. The proposed forward work program, and estimates which emerge are then considered by ASAC. The work program is finalised in the light of ASAC advice.

The culmination of the year's planning cycle is a comprehensive document describing the proposed work program for the ensuing triennium, associated performance indicators and proposed deployment of resources. This document is available for public scrutiny and comment.

Additional information on the ABS approach to strategic management and its activities to reduce provider load are available from the ABS on request (see Appendix 14 for details).

## SOCIAL JUSTICE, ACCESS AND EQUITY

During 1996-97 the ABS continued its support for social justice, access and equity. This support was primarily in the form of the provision of statistics that are available to government and community groups for developing and monitoring strategies in these fields, and by taking steps to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers in the collection of data. Internally, staff are kept aware of access and equity issues, particularly through personnel development activities.

The ABS forward work program attempts to meet the needs of government for statistics to support social justice policies by the identification of target groups in surveys. The ABS continued in 1996-97 to publish a wide range of statistics relevant to social justice, access and equity. These included the release of the annual *Australian Social Trends* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0), the *Australian Women's*

*Yearbook* (ABS Cat. no. 4124.0), statistics on families, health of children and people with disabilities, and the first issue of the biennial publication *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (ABS Cat. no. 4704.0).

To ensure that basic statistics are readily available to the community, publications are provided on a complimentary basis to major news media organisations and libraries. The ABS assists these libraries to display and use a wide array of information.

The ABS continued to consult with and inform ethnic communities of its statistical services and collections, through direct contact and through English and foreign language media. A handbook on ethnicity data, prepared by the ABS and covering issues involved in collection, computation and usage, is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

The ABS continued the implementation of its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Strategy including the ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategy, the Harassment Contact Officers' network and activities for members of the identified EEO groups. Eleven people were engaged as Public Administration Trainees or Trainee Administrative Service Officers.

A detailed statement on ABS contributions and outcomes in relation to social justice, access and equity, is available from the ABS on request (see Appendix 14 for details).

#### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

The ABS rolling three year forward work program is subject to both internal and external scrutiny.

Internal scrutiny of the work program and general ABS operations takes the form of:

- Periodic reviews directed at statistical collections, service functions, and cross-cutting issues. In reviews of statistical collections, external users are widely consulted, and, occasionally, external users assist the review team. Several reviews commenced or were completed in 1996-97, including reviews of the consumer price index, the transportation and tourism programs, the use of taxation data in economic collections, provisions for new businesses in economic collections, the survey of stocks, the data collection strategy for public trading enterprises, the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, ABS Catalogues, subscription services and the Library Extension Program.
- Annual reports from Branch Heads (in Central Office) and Regional Directors (in Regional Offices) to the Division Heads Meeting (comprising the Australian Statistician, Deputy Australian Statisticians and Division Heads). The reports cover the activities of the Branch or Office for the previous year, emerging issues and strategies, and indicators of performance.



- An internal audit program, conducted by external service providers, covering different facets of ABS operations. A number of compliance and performance audits commenced or were completed in 1996-97, including mobile phone usage, payments to agents, cost assessment/cost recovery and performance measurement and reporting. In addition, a Fraud Risk Assessment has been completed and a report was prepared for submission to the Office of Law Enforcement Coordination. Internal audit recommendations are reported to an Audit Committee chaired by the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division. The Audit Committee establishes the audit work program.

External scrutiny of the ABS takes the following forms:

- Consideration by ASAC of ABS priorities and proposals for the forward work program. ASAC advises the Statistician and the Treasurer, and produces its own annual report of issues considered and advice given.
- Portfolio evaluations and similar scrutinies. During 1996-97, an evaluation of the 1996 Census of Population and Housing commenced.
- Audits by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), either of ABS operations specifically or as part of across portfolio studies. In 1996-97, ANAO reviewed the ABS financial statements and the operations of the 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

The review of statistical activity by various user groups is another important form of external security. The groups include:

- Survey advisory committees established to advise ABS on the concepts, content and dissemination programs of major household surveys.
- Advisory boards established for user-funded statistical units, which provide advice on statistical priorities and data standards, and which monitor and support the implementation of agreed collections. The forward work programs for the statistical units are usually agreed between the Statistician and the board. In a number of cases the boards are supported by an expert technical advisory group.
- Standing expert advisory groups, comprising key government, business, academic and community group representatives provide advice on statistical priorities and developments in particular fields. During 1996-97, new groups were established in the fields of economic statistics, labour statistics and statistical methodology.
- Commonwealth/State working groups or committees, often attached to Ministerial Councils, which provide advice on emerging needs, priorities and areas for co-operation.

- Ad hoc groups brought together to provide advice on some aspect of statistical development or priorities.

Information on Freedom of Information, Inquiries by Parliamentary Committees, and Documents Tabled in Parliament is available in Appendixes 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

There were no adverse comments from the ANAO, Ombudsman, courts or tribunals during 1996-97.

## SECURITY

The ABS maintains a comprehensive security framework, overseen by a Protective Security Management Committee chaired by the First Assistant Statistician, Technology Services Division.

The legal requirements not to divulge identifiable information, and the strong confidentiality and security ethos which permeates the attitudes of ABS staff, are the most important elements of the ABS security screen. They are reinforced by a range of measures relating to the perimeter security of all ABS offices, the security measures protecting the ABS computing environment from any external access, and the security measures implemented for individual ABS data holdings.

Some features of the major elements of the security framework are described below.

### Undertakings of Fidelity and Secrecy under the *Census and Statistics Act*

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* obliges ABS staff to maintain the confidentiality and security of all data reported to and held by the ABS. Staff sign an undertaking of fidelity and secrecy under the terms of the Act. The personal responsibility of all staff is a crucial element of ABS culture; it is the foundation upon which the security of ABS data holdings is built.

The ABS has an enviable reputation for the preservation of the confidentiality of reported data, and for the protection of its statistical data holdings from unauthorised release. There have been no known cases of any ABS officer breaching the undertaking of fidelity and secrecy.

### Physical Security

All ABS premises are physically secure against unauthorised access. Entry is through electronically controlled access systems activated by individual coded keys. In addition, particularly sensitive output data, and the staff handling them, are located in physically isolated areas, which are protected by further electronic access systems.

### Computer Security

Access to ABS computing systems is based on personal identifiers that are password protected. The computer systems are regularly monitored and usage audited.

Further access control systems are used to protect any data designated 'sensitive'. Access to sensitive data is granted only under the authority of area line management (the 'owners' of the data) on the basis that access is required by the staff member to carry out his or her work duties.



## 2 THE PINT POT REVISITED

The 1988-89 ABS Annual Report contained an article entitled "A Quart out of a Pint Pot". That article concluded that between 1975-76 (when the ABS was established as a statutory authority) and 1988-89 the ABS made significant advances in terms of the range, timeliness and quality of its statistical products and services on a resource base that had been essentially static. In other words, it was getting "a quart out of a pint pot".

Since 1988-89, the performance of the ABS has continued to improve significantly, enabling it to better fulfil its mission of assisting and encouraging informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community.

### MEASURING PERFORMANCE

The 1988-89 article observed that

*"For agencies such as the ABS, whose output consists largely of products which it is funded by the taxpayer to make available as a public good, the determination of the appropriate criteria for assessment of performance is especially difficult".*

This observation remains true today. While it is relatively straightforward to measure the ABS's inputs (for example, the number of staff that are used or the cost of its activities), there are no meaningful, comprehensive measures of output.

Instead, a broad indication of changes in the performance of the ABS can be derived only through qualitative analysis. In this article, a series of case studies (covering key ABS outputs) will illustrate the improvements in the statistical service for each of the areas studied.

### THE ABS'S INPUTS

In 1996-97, the ABS used 3,899 staff years, of which 821 related to the Population Census. In 1988-89, 3,441 staff years were used, 71 on the Census. Thus, when the fluctuations associated with the quinquennial Census are excluded, ABS staff usage has fallen by 292 staff years, or almost 9%, over the past 8 years.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to make a direct comparison between the ABS's "running costs" (i.e. expenditure) in 1988-89 and 1996-97 due to changes in both accounting treatments and the expenditure items for which the ABS is responsible. However, if it were possible for accurate adjustments to be made for these differences, the impact of inflation and costs associated with work in new fields that has been specifically funded, would likely show that there has been a slight decrease in the real resources available for the underlying ABS work program.

## CASE STUDIES OF ENHANCED PERFORMANCE

### National accounts

The national accounts bring together, in a coherent framework, the overall trends in the Australian economy, sourced from a large range of statistical collections.

The main national accounts publication is the quarterly *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product* (ABS Cat. no. 5206.0). The major development in this publication since 1988-89 has been the inclusion of constant price estimates of gross product by industry. These estimates had been previously published, with a significant time lag, in a separate publication. Concurrent publication of the three measures of GDP — income, expenditure, and product — has enabled the derivation of an average measure, GDP(A), which provides a more reliable indicator of overall movement in the economy.

In 1988-89, the quarterly national accounts publication contained no trend estimates. Trend estimates are now published for all series that are seasonally adjusted (over 200 series). Seasonally adjusted series are now published for implicit price deflators and the household income and outlay account. The publication also includes enhanced analytical material (both additional series and commentary).

Other significant enhancements to national accounts output since 1988-89 include:

- Improvements to the annual *Australian National Accounts: State Accounts* (ABS Cat. no. 5206.0) publication, with the inclusion of estimates of gross state product (income) at constant prices, estimates of state final demand and its components (in both original and constant prices) and estimates of real gross state income.
- The introduction of a new quarterly publication *Australian National Accounts: Financial Accounts* (ABS Cat. no. 5232.0), which provides information on the levels and flows of financial assets and liabilities for each sector of the economy.
- The introduction of new annual publications *Australian National Accounts: Multifactor Productivity* (ABS Cat. no. 5234.0) and *Australian National Accounts: National Balance Sheet* (ABS Cat. no. 5241.0).
- The release of two occasional papers *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (ABS Cat. no. 5240.0) and *Prices, Productivity, Profits and Pay* (ABS Cat. no. 5239.0).

In 1993, a quarterly State accounts publication was introduced. However, due to concerns over the quality of some of the series, the publication will be discontinued after the June quarter 1997 issue. Those series that are of acceptable quality will continue to be made available to users in some other form.

In 1994, the ABS commenced a work program aimed at enhancing the relevance, coherence and accuracy of the Australian national accounts. Two major factors influenced this new work:

- The release of System of National Accounts, 1993, a new international standard for national accounting.
- The completion of two major reviews by the ABS of the methods used to compile the accounts, which identified new compilation methods for improving the national accounts.

This work will take several years to complete. However, improvements in the quality and coherence of the national accounts as a result of the work undertaken so far are already evident.

#### International accounts

The international accounts provide important information on Australia's balance of payments and its international investment position (including foreign debt). Since 1988-89, major developments in this area of statistics have included:

- Significant improvements to the range, quality, timeliness and detail available for Australia's international trade in services statistics. For transportation, travel, insurance and financial services, better estimates are now produced from new and enhanced collections by both the ABS and other agencies. For other services, estimates are obtained from a new business survey, which commenced on a biennial basis but is now conducted on a quarterly basis.
- Inclusion of trend estimates for the major current account series in the quarterly publication *Balance of Payments, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5302.0).
- Inclusion of implicit price deflators for goods and services items in the quarterly balance of payments publication.
- Inclusion of constant price and seasonally adjusted estimates for services items in the quarterly balance of payments publication.
- The development of estimates of Australian State of provision or consumption for many service items.
- Improvement in the quality of statistics on goods exports by compiling the data on the basis of when the goods are shipped (closely approximating change of ownership) rather than when administrative records are processed.
- A major improvement in the timeliness of the quarterly publication *International Investment Position, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5306.0). In 1988-89, the publication was released on average 123 days after the reference period. In 1996-97, the time lag was only 65 days. This improvement in timeliness enabled the discontinuation of the preliminary publication, and meant almost 200 additional quarterly series becoming available earlier.

- Development of quarterly (rather than annual) estimates of the reinvested earnings of direct investors and the level of investment in Australian corporate equities.
- Development of collections to obtain data on cross-border financial derivatives, which will shortly be incorporated into balance of payments and international investment estimates.
- Release of a new annual publication, *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5363.0). This publication, which replaced three related but more narrowly focussed publications, highlights the relationship between the underlying series and better serves user needs.

The monthly balance of payments publication was recently discontinued due to increasing concerns about the quality of the monthly estimates. It was replaced by a monthly publication providing estimates of trade in goods and services.

## Services

During the 1990s the ABS has consolidated and expanded its program of surveys of service industries. There is now in place an annual program of surveys on the nature, structure and operation of detailed service industries, and of significant across-industry activities. Most service industries are now surveyed every 3 to 6 years as part of this program.

Since 1988-89, the ABS has released 37 publications from the service industries program, of which 29 have been new titles. Also the timeliness of the release of publications has improved significantly.

Highlights of the service industries surveys program since 1988-89 have included:

- Release, in 1990-91, of publications from the first major survey of business and professional service industries. A number of these industries have since been the subject of repeat surveys.
- Conduct of the 1992-93 surveys of government and business use of information technology.
- Conduct of the 1992-93 and 1995-96 surveys of information technology and telecommunications producers.
- Conduct of the 1994-95 private medical practice industry survey, which was a world first in terms of a comprehensive study of this industry.
- Conduct of the 1994-95 gambling industry survey, which brought together data for all businesses involved in the provision of gambling services.



- Conduct of the 1995-96 community services industry survey, which was also a world first.

As well as the developments in service industries surveys, there have been a number of other important developments in services statistics since 1988-89, including:

- Improvement in the timeliness of the release of the monthly publication *Retail Trade, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8501.0). The estimates in respect of December quarter 1988 were released 59 days after the reference period, while the estimates in respect of December quarter 1996 were released 35 days after the reference period.
- Availability of annual overview information on the structure and operations of the service industries sector from the economic activity survey.
- Commencement of work on the development of producer price indexes for the output of transport, property services and a selection of the wide range of business service industries, as part of a long term program to provide an expanded range of price indexes for the services sector.
- Commencement of work on developing enhanced productivity measures for service industries.
- Significant increases in the range, detail and quality of information on international trade in services (see the international accounts case study for more details).

#### Labour statistics

Labour statistics provide information on Australia's employment and unemployment, as well as information on other issues relating to the labour force such as earnings, hours, job vacancies and training.

Significant developments in these statistics since 1988-89 include:

- Conduct of a number of employer training expenditure surveys.
- Conduct of two surveys of employer training practices.
- Conduct of three household surveys on training and education experience.
- Conduct of a graduate destination survey.
- Conduct of a longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns to provide information about labour market dynamics.
- Introduction of *Labour Force Projections, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6260.0).

- Introduction of an annual publication *Australian Labour Market* (ABS Cat. no. 6284.0), which contains a series of articles analysing data from the labour household survey program.
- Introduction of a compendium publication *Education and Training in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4224.0).
- Expansion in the number of series in the monthly publication *Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS Cat. no. 6202.0) from 1115 to 1458, including the introduction of trend series for the Northern Territory and the ACT. The publication also now includes an analysis of the sensitivity of trend estimates.
- Introduction of regular feature articles in the monthly publication *Labour Force, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6203.0).
- Introduction of trend and seasonally adjusted estimates for average weekly earnings, job vacancies and overtime series.
- Introduction of estimates of average weekly earnings by broad industry.
- Commencement of the first phase of the survey to collect wage cost data for the new labour cost index.

#### Population estimates

Population estimates are among the more important statistics produced by the ABS. Major developments since 1988-89 include:

- Development of a capacity to undertake small area population projections for electoral and other purposes. This capacity enables the ABS to provide, on a consultancy basis, sub-State projections that are consistent with the broader State estimates.
- Introduction of a new series of household estimates by Part of State that are conceptually consistent with the resident population series. The statistics have been published at the capital city/balance of State level and are available for smaller areas on a consultancy basis.
- Publication of registered birth and death data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Introduction of experimental Indigenous population estimates and projections. The statistics have been published at the State level and are available for smaller areas on a consultancy basis.

There have also been improvements in the accuracy of Australian and State/Territory preliminary population estimates. The intercensal discrepancy (a measure of the adjustment made to population estimates after each Population Census) was, after the 1996 Census, an unprecedented low level of 0.1% (underestimation) compared with 0.3% (overestimation) five years earlier. The mean State/Territory intercensal discrepancy also fell, from 1.2% to 0.5%.

The rate of under enumeration of the 1996 Census, at 1.6%, was the lowest ever recorded. The rate for the 1991 Census was 1.8%, down from the 1.9% recorded for the 1986 Census.

#### OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

The case studies provided above cover only part of the ABS's activities. Similar improvements have occurred in almost all other areas and a comprehensive listing of these would be well beyond the scope of this article. However, it is worthwhile to document some of the more significant developments that have occurred since 1988-89, which are illustrative of the significant expansion in ABS activity.

##### Economic statistics

Since 1988-89, a number of new economic collections have been introduced, including:

- An annual economic activity survey, which provides, on a consistent basis, information on the structure, activity and performance of businesses in the Australian economy.
- A quarterly survey of business expectations.
- A longitudinal survey of small and medium enterprises, which provides information on the growth and performance of these businesses over time.
- A biennial survey of the household use of information technology.
- A biennial survey of the characteristics of small businesses.
- A quarterly freight movements survey (which is currently suspended pending a methodological review).
- A quarterly survey of superannuation.
- A quarterly survey of financial information.
- New supplementary collections to the annual agricultural census.
- A biennial household survey on environmental issues.
- A set of surveys of innovation, conducted in respect of 1993-94. A further set of innovation surveys will be conducted in respect of 1996-97.

In addition, a number of enhancements to existing surveys have been made, including:

- The collection of data on environment related issues in agricultural, mining, manufacturing, and economic activity collections.

- The extension of the scope of the mining census to cover services to mining.
- The collection of information on profit by State in the survey of company profits.
- The collection of a break down of type of equipment in the survey of new capital expenditure.

In 1992-93 the ABS introduced an environment unit. The purpose of the unit is to provide a focus for ABS activities concerned with environmental accounting and environment statistics. The unit has been responsible for a number of publications, including *Australians and the Environment* (ABS Cat. no. 4601.0), a major compendium publication, *Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices* (ABS Cat. no. 4602.0), *Environment Protection Expenditure* (ABS Cat. no. 4603.0) and *Energy Accounts for Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4604.0).

In February 1991 a new monthly compendium publication *Australian Economic Indicators* (ABS Cat. no. 1350.0) was introduced.

A number of other new compendium publications dealing with economic statistics have been produced, including *Agriculture Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 7113.0), *Australian Wine and Grape Industry* (ABS Cat. no. 1329.0), *Australian Mining Industry* (ABS Cat. no. 8414.0), *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5512.0) and *Motor Vehicles in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 9311.0).

The integration of the ABS's economic statistics has long been an important element in the quality of these statistics. Significant developments in this aspect of the ABS's work in recent years have included:

- Improved estimates of the impact of new businesses, including the development of a consistent approach to the incorporation of these in the various economic series.
- The use of common frames for the selection of units for sub-annual economic surveys.
- The development and use of standard questions across economic surveys.
- Significantly increased data confrontation, in which statistics from one collection are compared with similar statistics from another.
- More effective use of Australian Taxation Office data in the maintenance of the ABS's business register.

Underlying the ABS's economic statistics is a range of classifications, most of which have been revised since 1988-89. Of particular note was the development of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification and the Australian and New Zealand Standard Commodity Classification, both of which replaced classifications that had pertained to Australia only.

Somewhat offsetting the significant enhancements in economic statistics since 1988-89 have been some reduction in work programs including:

- Reductions in detail in the agricultural census. Some items, such as fertilisers and irrigation have been discontinued or now only partially covered, and cereal crop forecasts are now no longer available from the collection.
- Discontinuation of the mining technology survey.
- Cessation of building commencement statistics for States other than Western Australia and South Australia.
- A reduction in the content and frequency of manufacturing production collections. Up until 1994 the ABS collected monthly information about 500 commodities. Now 29 commodities are collected on a quarterly basis and a further 87 commodities collected on an annual basis.

Also, in future years, there will be further reductions in work program as a result of measures announced in the 1997-98 Commonwealth Budget. Chapter 1 has details of these reductions.

#### Social statistics

A key feature of the ABS's social statistics activities since 1988-89 has been a significant increase in the number of special supplementary surveys conducted. These surveys provide detailed information about particular social issues. In the late 1980s the ABS typically conducted one such survey each year, while in recent years four or five of these surveys have been conducted each year. Some of these surveys have been in respect of labour issues, which are noted in the labour statistics case study above; however there has also been a significant increase in other social survey activity.

Some of the highlights of this expanded survey activity include:

- Two national health surveys, conducted in 1989-90 and 1995. The survey will be repeated every five years.
- A new nutrition survey, conducted in conjunction with the 1995 health survey.
- A national time use survey, conducted for the first time in 1992 (in 1987 a small time use survey had been conducted in Sydney only). This survey will be repeated in 1997.
- A survey of Australia's families, conducted in 1992.

- A national survey of crime and safety conducted in 1993. The survey, will be repeated every five years.
- A survey of disability, ageing and carers, conducted in 1993. This survey will be repeated every five years.
- A household expenditure survey conducted in 1993-94. This survey is repeated every five years.
- A survey of housing, conducted for the first time in 1994.
- A new national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders survey, conducted in 1994.
- The introduction of a new continuous survey of income and housing costs in 1994.
- A new women's safety survey, conducted in 1996.
- A new survey of literacy, conducted in 1996.
- A new survey of mental health, conducted in 1996-97

In addition, in 1993 the ABS introduced a household survey vehicle called the Population Survey Monitor, which is conducted on a user funded basis. This omnibus survey collects data on a wide and varied range of topics each quarter. Results from the survey are published in *Population Survey Monitor* (ABS Cat. no. 4103.0). (See Appendix 11 for topics surveyed during 1996-97.)

In 1992, an annual survey of private health care establishments was introduced.

Since 1988-89 the ABS has created a number of statistical units, in areas such as crime and justice statistics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics, cultural and recreation statistics, youth statistics, family statistics and women's statistics. The role of each unit is to lead the development of statistics within a particular field, to "mine" data that are available both from ABS collections and from other agencies about this field of statistics and to present these data to users in a coherent fashion. In some cases, for example in the area of crime and justice statistics, the units have achieved significant progress in improving the comparability of statistics derived as a by-product of administrative systems.

The period since 1988-89 has seen an increase in the analytical and thematic publications produced in respect of social issues. The flagship of these is the annual *Australian Social Trends* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0), which was first released in 1994. Other new analytical or thematic publications produced since 1988-89 include *Australia's Young People* (ABS Cat. no. 4123.0), the *Australian Women's Yearbook* (ABS Cat. no. 4124.0), *Cultural Trends in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4172.0), the *Focus on Families* series of publications (ABS Cat. nos. 4420.0 to 4425.0) and *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (ABS Cat. no. 4704.0), a joint publication with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.



*Governor-General Sir William Deane with members of the Larrakia People at the launch in Darwin on 2 April 1997 of The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, a joint publication of the ABS and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.*

## Dissemination of information

The traditional method of disseminating ABS information, via printed publications, remains the main way in which users access this information. Since 1988-89, the range of analytical information in ABS publications has increased, and the style and layout of publications improved. However, a wider range of product formats and delivery mechanisms is increasingly being favoured by users. The ABS has met this demand with a number of significant developments since 1988-89 including:

- The introduction of PC-Ausstats, an easy to use, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on-line time series data service. Over 100,000 statistical series from 85 publications are available through this service.
- The development of an ABS World Wide Web site on the Internet. This site, known as the ABS Statsite, can be found at <http://www.abs.gov.au>. The site contains guides to ABS services, other selected documents, and a wide range of summary ABS statistics.
- The introduction of Fasttracks, a dissemination facility to respond to ad hoc requests for international trade statistics. This facility is now available as part of the ABS Information Warehouse.
- The development of the *Integrated Regional Database* (ABS Cat. no. 1353.0), which provides a wide range of social, economic and environmental data on a regional basis.
- The release of the *Statistical Concepts Reference Library* (ABS Cat. no. 1361.0.30.001), a CD-ROM product containing a comprehensive reference library of ABS publications describing the concepts, sources and methods used to compile Australia's major economic and social statistics
- The release of *Year Book, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 1301.0.30.001) on CD-ROM.
- The release annually of *Historical Publications on CD-ROM* (ABS Cat. no. 1124.0), which contains images of every printed publication produced by the ABS in the calendar year.

In addition, the range of ABS data available on floppy disk and other computer readable media has expanded significantly since 1988-89.

In 1989-90 the ABS introduced two new services: an information consultancy service which provides, on a fee basis, a service to clients requiring complex information and a statistical consultancy service which provides, also on a fee basis, assistance to clients with their statistical activities.



In 1991 the ABS has also established a Library Extension Program (LEP), which aims to provide, via a wide range of libraries across Australia, community access to ABS data and to raise community awareness of ABS data. Under the LEP, a wide range of ABS products is provided to libraries on a complimentary basis. This program has grown significantly since its introduction.

Since 1988-89 the ABS has produced new directories in the fields of tourism, transport, industrial relations, labour market and social, Census, and education and training statistics. These directories provide comprehensive lists of statistics available in particular fields.

In recent years, the ABS has been developing a data 'Warehouse' in order to improve client service through better catalogued, more visible, and more accessible output data. Many ABS publications are now produced using data from the Warehouse, and it is the primary tool for meeting requests through the ABS's client services.

Finally, the timeliness of ABS publications, particularly main economic indicators, has generally improved since 1988-89, as the following table shows:

**TIME BETWEEN END OF REFERENCE PERIOD AND RELEASE OF DATA: MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATOR SERIES**  
(average number of elapsed days)

	1988-89	1996-97
Monthly	42	35
Quarterly	74	60

#### THE KEYS TO ENHANCED PRODUCTIVITY

There are three key factors underlying the progress described above:

- ABS staff and work arrangements.
- The impact of technology.
- The cooperation of data providers.

##### Staff and work arrangements

The ABS has always enjoyed high quality and committed staff. The Bureau has always sought to enhance the skills of its staff and the opportunities staff have to work efficiently and effectively. In recent years, the ABS has been particularly active in developing:

- A performance based culture.
- The leadership and management skills of its staff.
- The ability of staff to cope with, and thrive on, change.

- An emphasis on teams, and a reduction in unnecessary hierarchies.
- An improved physical environment.

In terms of work arrangements, the most significant development since 1988-89 has been the establishment of national project centres for most of the ABS's statistical activities. In a national project centre, responsibility for the development, collection, processing and related functions for Australia-wide surveys or statistics produced as by-products from administrative systems is held by a project team located in a single ABS office. Prior to the establishment of national project centres, the operations for most ABS statistical activities were conducted across a number of offices.

The move to national project centres generated significant savings due to efficiencies in processing, as well as providing a more rewarding set of job opportunities for many processing staff.

#### Impact of technology

The ABS, with its requirements to store and manipulate large data sets, has always been at the forefront of the use of information technology. The years since 1988-89 have seen a continuation of significant changes in this area, with some of the most notable being:

- An upgrade of the ABS mainframe computer.
- A substantial increase in the number of microcomputers, from around 700 to over 3,000, which are now all networked through local area networks.
- The introduction of mid-range computers and the sophisticated database products that operate on these machines.
- Significant enhancements to the ABS computer network through improved software and better communication links.
- The introduction of distributed processing and client/server systems.
- The introduction of internal cost recovery for information technology services, which has caused client areas to better understand, and manage, information technology costs.
- The development of enhanced collection tools, including a greater use of electronic data capture and computer assisted telephone interviewing systems and the introduction of computer assisted personal interview and computer assisted data entry systems.
- The introduction of optical character recognition technology for data capture.
- The development of generalised facilities for survey processing, which reduce training and maintenance costs and encourage the use of "best practice" in processing techniques.

- The development of office automation facilities, in particular the introduction of Lotus NOTES and the automation of many administrative processes.

All of the initiatives above were funded from ongoing Budget appropriations — that is, no supplementation was received in order for the ABS to acquire and adopt new technologies.

#### Relations with providers

Without the cooperation of its data providers, the ABS would have been unable to achieve many of the enhancements described in this article. The ABS continues to maintain very good relations with its data providers, which is evidenced by the very low number of prosecution actions initiated under the provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act*. (Details on prosecution action in recent years are provided in Chapter 5.)

The ABS continually seeks to minimise the load that it places on providers. In 1985 it was estimated that, for business collections, the load imposed by the ABS was about 850,000 hours. By 1993 this had fallen to an estimated 724,000 hours. In 1996-97, the load had been further reduced to 604,000 hours.

Recent developments in the area of provider load are described in Chapter 1.

#### CONCLUSION

Over the past eight years significant enhancements have been made across the whole range of ABS activities. Many of these enhancements have been possible because of increased productivity in the ABS's use of its resources. Others have been achieved with additional Budget and user funding. However, it is clear that the ABS is continuing to extract a "quart" or more of statistical output out of a "pint pot" of resources.



### 3 THE 1996 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

*"A beautiful set of numbers*

*The five yearly Census is one of the best public investments Australia makes. It pays for itself many times over in the information it provides for planners in both the private and public sectors. At the everyday human level its findings are engrossing, especially when tracked over time."*

(Adelaide Advertiser, 17 July 1997)

#### PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted the Census of Population and Housing on Tuesday 6 August 1996. On many measures the thirteenth national Census was the most successful Census that has ever been conducted by the ABS.

- The majority of the 1996 Census results were released on 15 July 1997; this was less than 12 months after the Census, and was quicker than from any previous Census.
- At 1.6%, the Census under-enumeration rate — a key measure of the performance of the Census — was the lowest recorded since post-enumeration surveys have been used to assess the completeness of population counts (1966).
- Other performance indicators show that the 1996 Census data are of a high quality.
- At a cost of \$7.60 per head of the population, the 1996 Census, adjusted for inflation, was 2.3% cheaper than the 1991 Census and 3.9% cheaper than the 1986 Census.
- A performance audit tabled by the Australian National Audit Office on 3 June 1997 concluded that the 1996 Census had been carried out in an efficient and effective manner.

The performance of the 1996 Census puts Australia at the forefront of world best practice. Of the countries that Australia normally compares with, only Canada and New Zealand conducted a Census in 1996.

- In Canada, population and dwelling counts were released about 11 months after the Census with other results released considerably later. In New Zealand, population and dwelling counts were also released about 11 months after the Census with remaining data released progressively thereafter. In Australia, the majority of the Census data were released 11 months after the Census.
- The Australian under-enumeration rate (1.6%) was higher than for New Zealand (1.2%) but lower than for Canada (at least 3%).

- At a cost of \$7.60 per head of population Australia had the lowest Census cost. The comparable Canadian cost was A\$11.20, and New Zealand A\$8.30.

Key factors contributing to the success of the 1996 Census included:

- a highly successful public relations campaign that resulted in a high level of community awareness of the Census. ABS tracking research indicated that some 95% of people aged 18 years or over had heard about the Census before Census night. In the final week, the Census was also the second most talked about issue nationally, behind only the Olympics;
- a high level of public cooperation. With a refusal rate of only 0.1%, there was almost universal cooperation with the Census;
- re-engineering of the Census processes, including the adoption of a staged processing and release strategy of Census data;
- implementation of a continuous improvement strategy; and
- application of project management principles and practice.

#### CENSUS OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the Census is to measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night. This provides a reliable basis to estimate the population of each State, Territory and local government area, primarily for electoral purposes (including the determination of the number of seats allocated to each State and Territory in the House of Representatives) and for the distribution of government funds. The Census also provides the characteristics of the Australian population and its housing for small geographic areas and small population groups. This information supports the planning, administration and policy development of governments, business and other users.

#### CENSUS DEVELOPMENT

The content of the Census and the collection and processing procedures were determined following an extensive program of public consultation. Details of this program, as well as the recommendations of an inter-departmental committee set up to examine the frequency and cost of the Census, were included in an article published in the ABS Annual Report, 1993-94.

With 52 questions asked of every person on Census night, the Census provided key information on a diverse range of topics including religion, ethnicity, education, labour force, transport, income, housing and demographic characteristics.

## CENSUS COLLECTION

The collection phase was a significant logistical exercise, the objectives of which were to ensure that by Census night (6 August) every dwelling in Australia, regardless of where it was located, received a Census form and that the duly completed form was picked up by a Census collector within eight days.

### Field Operations

Some of the more significant aspects of the collection operation were:

- 40,000 temporary staff were employed to deliver Census forms to, and collect them from, over 7 million households (including those located in Australia's external territories and in Antarctica). Over 100,000 individual payments were made to these staff. Of these, about 3% were not paid on time.
- 1,600 tonnes of material was delivered to, and collected from, collection staff.
- All completed Census forms were returned to the Data Processing Centre in Sydney without any security breaches.
- The ABS answered 370,000 calls to the Census Hotline, a telephone inquiry and interpreter service provided to the public in the period immediately before and after the Census. Many more calls were dealt with by recorded messages. With an estimated 2 million call attempts, the demand on the Hotline outstripped ABS ability to respond promptly.
- The Collection Operation Management System — a computer-based application designed to record collector workloads, action advice from the Census Hotline, coordinate recruitment, provide staff information, deliver training material, and calculate payments to Census collection staff — was used successfully despite teething problems. This system, developed by the ABS, was used by 145 Field Managers working from their homes across the country. This was the first time in the world that Census field operations have been controlled and managed by a computer-based system.

### Public Relations

The principal aim of the public relations campaign was to raise Census awareness and seek public cooperation to participate in the 1996 Census.

The 1996 Census public relations campaign was officially launched at Parliament House in Canberra on 25 July 1996 by the Hon Peter Costello MP, Treasurer, and the Australian Statistician. This was followed by a comprehensive paid advertising campaign in the electronic and print media which was completed on 14 August. Senior ABS staff took many opportunities to promote the Census through print media, television, and radio interviews including radio talk-back. In particular a special effort was made to promote the message in rural areas.

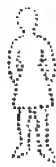


**CENSUS**  
1996

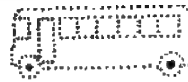
What is the Census?



Let's complete the picture.



**Help us complete**



**the whole picture.**



Even if you're a night owl,  
you still count.



Let's complete the picture.

The answers you provide on your Census Form, on **August 6**, are invaluable. They will build a picture of Australia that makes it possible to plan for the future. We will know where new roads, houses, hospitals, schools and new shopping centres and factories are most needed.

So please, fill in your Census Form as accurately as you can, not just for Australia's future, but for your future too. All information gathered is strictly confidential.

**Planning a Better Australia Together**



Count on a  
better future.



Let's complete the picture.

CEN 13/204/66

**TUES 6 AUG**

A Census Collector will  
soon be visiting you.



Let's complete the picture.

Your chance to say where  
our population went to.



Let's complete the picture.

At Census time,  
New Zealanders are  
in great demand.



Let's complete the picture.



The Census coincided with the 1996 Olympic Games and this provided a unique opportunity to promote awareness of the Census. Arrangements were made for a countdown to Census night during the televised Olympics highlights in the week leading up to the Census. The promotion effort peaked with the airing of a special Census story during prime time television on Sunday 4 August.

Tracking research commissioned by the ABS showed that public awareness of the Census was very high with 95% of people aged 18 years or more having heard of the Census before the delivery of the forms. Awareness of the paid media advertising campaign was 68%, significantly higher than the rate of 40% normally achieved in similar Government campaigns.

In the week before the Census, media coverage grew to such a level it was reported that the Census was the second most talked about issue nationally, behind only the Olympics. This undoubtedly had a significant impact on public awareness.

#### Special Enumeration Strategies

To ensure the effective enumeration of particular sub-groups of the population, three specific strategies were put into place to complement the main collection procedures and public relations activities. The specific strategies were:

- An *ethnic enumeration strategy* aimed at creating a ground swell of support for the Census from the many ethnic community groups that exist throughout Australia.
- An *Indigenous enumeration strategy* aimed at providing culturally appropriate awareness raising campaigns and collection procedures for the enumeration of Indigenous people (for example, in some communities, the enumeration was conducted by interview by local Indigenous people, using forms specifically designed for this purpose).
- A *homeless enumeration strategy* focused on maximising coverage of the homeless population through raising awareness of the Census and by implementing special procedures around Census night to enumerate homeless people. Groups providing services to homeless people were contacted to gain the support of their clients and to identify areas where homeless people could be found.

#### CENSUS DATA PROCESSING

After the Census forms had been collected from households they were delivered to the Data Processing Centre (DPC) in Sydney. At its peak, the DPC employed 1,027 people. Over 10 million forms had to be stored and moved through the processing phase.

Individual responses on Census forms were read, and transferred to computer, using Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) technology. Those Census questions which required handwritten responses (which could not be read by OMR) were coded using computer assisted coding. Neither names nor addresses were recorded on computer files.

The quality of processed data was very high and quantitative measures indicate that it generally exceeded that produced in respect of the 1991 Census. This was due largely to a continuous quality improvement program implemented at the DPC. The incorporation of continuous data validation during processing and greater emphasis placed by staff on data quality, also greatly contributed to this outcome.

The DPC achieved higher than expected production rates leading to the completion of processing around four weeks ahead of schedule, less than a year after Census night, and within budget.

#### CENSUS OUTPUT AND DISSEMINATION

The key goal for the output and dissemination phase of the Census was to ensure that data were widely available and utilised. Also, the ABS set out to improve the timeliness and predictability of the delivery of 1996 Census products and services. A dissemination business plan was developed to ensure these outcomes. All 1996 Census products and services are expected to be released either on or ahead of the schedule advised to users in December 1995.

All Census data, with the exception of those on labour force and family for New South Wales and Victoria, were released on 15 July 1997 in concurrent launches held in all capital cities. *Regional Population Growth, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 3218.0) was also released at the Census launch. The remaining NSW data were released in August, and the remaining Victorian data are expected to be released in October 1997.

There were a number of key releases leading up to the launch of the Census results:

- Census meta data including the *Census Dictionary* (ABS Cat. no. 2901.0), *Statistical Geography: Volume 1 — Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1216.0), *Census of Population and Housing: Collection District and Statistical Local Area Reference Maps, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 2920.0) and *Census of Population and Housing: Digital Boundaries, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 2923.0). These were released prior to the availability of 1996 Census results.
- *Directory of Census Statistics* (ABS. Cat. no. 2910.0) was released in April 1997.
- *Australian Demographic Statistics — 1996 Census Edition, December Quarter 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 3101.0), with rebased estimated resident populations using 1996 Census data, was released on 6 June 1997.



*Queenie Hazell, born in 1911, has been around for every Census. She is pictured with Victorian Population Census Director Vince Lazzaro.*



*The Year 6 pupils from St Mary Magdalene's in Chadstone in Victoria, seen here with the Census School poster, reflect the multicultural nature of Melbourne's population. Around 30% of the class were born overseas in non-English speaking countries.*

## CENSUS EVALUATION

### Post-Enumeration Survey

The post-enumeration survey (PES) was conducted two weeks after the Census. Respondents in the survey were asked where they were on Census night and at what addresses they may have been counted. The PES forms were matched against the corresponding Census forms in order to determine the proportion of the population missed or double-counted in the Census.

The under-enumeration rate, as measured by the PES, is a key measure of the performance of the Census collection operation. The PES showed that the Australian undercount rate improved from 1.8% in the 1991 Census to 1.6% in the 1996 Census. A similar improvement occurred for all States and Territories, ranging from 0.1 percentage points in Queensland to 0.5 percentage points in Western Australia, confirming that the collection operation of the 1996 Census was conducted to a very high standard.

### Performance Audit

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) completed a performance audit of the 1996 Census and tabled the Audit Report in Parliament on 3 June 1997. The key finding of the Audit was:

*"The ANAO considers that the part of the 1996 Census cycle completed to March 1997 (including incorporation of the results of the evaluation of the 1991 Census into the development of the 1996 Census, the development and collection phases and a significant part of the processing phase) has been generally carried out efficiently and effectively by the ABS."*

### Portfolio Evaluation Program

The 1996 Census will also be evaluated as part of the Treasury Portfolio Evaluation Program. Phase one of the evaluation, which covers the development and collection phases of the Census, is expected to be completed by late 1997. The remaining two phases of the evaluation, which will cover processing and dissemination, are due to be completed in 1998 and 1999 respectively.

A similar evaluation was undertaken on the 1991 Census, with the results outlined in an article in the ABS Annual Report, 1993-94.

## 4 STATISTICAL OPERATIONS SUB-PROGRAM

### OBJECTIVES

The statistical operations sub-program contributes to the following objectives of the ABS Corporate Plan:

- Informed and satisfied clients through an objective, relevant and responsive statistical service.
- Reliable, timely and coherent statistics.
- Good relations with providers, respecting their rights.
- Continuing productivity improvements.
- A high regard held for the ABS by decision makers and the community.

### DESCRIPTION

The statistical operations sub-program operates in response to the statistical needs of governments and the wider community, taking into account the public and private costs associated with collecting, processing and disseminating statistical information. During 1996-97 the sub-program operated using a total of 3,546 staff years (including 728 staff years in the Population Census Data Processing Centre), representing 91% of total ABS operative staffing. The cost of the sub-program was \$294.2 million.

At the broad level, the activities undertaken within the sub-program include:

- Collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistics.
- Coordination of the statistical activities of other agencies (through participation in national and State statistical committees and through the ABS outposted and statistical consultancy services).
- Provision of professional statistical support.
- Development, maintenance and promotion of statistical standards, classifications and frameworks.

The work program of the statistical operations sub-program is determined after extensive consultation with governments, businesses and community groups and with the advice of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council. In determining the work program, account is taken of the needs of users, the benefits of statistics, the load on providers, the availability of skilled resources to undertake the work, and the costs associated with the activities.

The statistical operations sub-program depends on the corporate services sub-program for a wide range of support functions, including human and financial resource management.

Individual components within the sub-program have close links with a wide range of specific government programs which provide a source of data, with users of statistical information and with clients of the statistical coordination and consultancy services. The statistical activities of other agencies complement the statistical operations sub-program resulting in a comprehensive national statistical service.

Costs and average staffing levels of the sub-program are shown in the following table.

**COST OF STATISTICAL OPERATIONS SUB-PROGRAM AND AVERAGE STAFFING LEVEL**

	1994 95	1995-96	1996-97
Total cost (\$'000)	196 673	222 440	294 237
Cost as a percentage of ABS expenditure (%)	86	87	90
Average Operative Staff Years(a)	2 759	(b)2 774	3 546

(a) More detailed information is available in Appendix 3, Table 3.1.

(b) revised

## OUTPUTS

The ABS exploits many avenues for the dissemination of its statistical information with printed publications currently being the main first release medium.

The ABS operates two Internet services. The first, the ABS home page known as the 'Statsite' is generally accessible and provides 'public good' information free of charge (at <http://www.abs.gov.au>). The second service provides access to ABS time series for staff and students of subscribing Australian university libraries. The ABS is also increasingly using the Internet to deliver information to clients via electronic mail.

Other modes used for the dissemination of information include computer-readable media (floppy disk, CD-ROM, magnetic tape), microfiche (although being phased out), and a number of facilities allowing electronic access. This latter form of access includes PC-Ausstats — an on-line service for delivering time series data to customers. The ABS also provides 'Dial-a-Statistic' — a 0055 telephone recorded message service covering the most frequently sought information.

The ABS operates, in each of its regional offices, a free, quick reference, central information service for routine statistical information. The ABS also offers an information consultancy service, on a fee-for-service basis, for clients requiring more complex information.

In most fields, more detailed statistics and other forms of statistics than those initially released in publications are available through the ABS information consultancy service.

Even with the array of measures described above, the ABS cannot in practice meet the needs of all users of statistics directly. Various information intermediaries therefore play an important role in disseminating statistics. These include all branches of the media, libraries (general and specialised), commercial information networks, and business, academic and other research services.

Consistent with the Government's user pays policy, the ABS charges for its products and services regardless of whether they are being provided to governments or the community generally. The aims of this policy are to encourage users to identify and address their real needs for statistics, to enable the demand for ABS products to be used as an indicator of how ABS resources should be used, and to offset the cost of production of the statistics.

The ABS has 'public interest' obligations to ensure that at least basic statistics are both readily available and affordable. To meet these obligations, publications are made available on a complimentary basis to parliamentarians, major news media organisations and parliamentary, public and tertiary institution libraries. In addition, the ABS conducts a Library Extension Program, with 529 libraries participating across Australia. These libraries are provided with free ABS publications and some electronic services to meet the needs of their local communities.

The following tables show information relating to ABS outputs.

**PUBLICATION TITLES, 1995-96 and 1996-97**  
(number)

	Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	Other	Total
<b>1995-96</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>1996-97</b>					
National	67	28	28	73	196
New South Wales	9	3	4	3	19
Victoria	9	3	3	5	20
Queensland	8	3	4	4	19
Western Australia	8	3	3	5	19
South Australia	6	2	3	4	15
Tasmania	6	2	3	3	14
Northern Territory	7	2	1	4	14
Australian Capital Territory	6	2	1	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>(a)126</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>326</b>

(a) Annual figure has increased due to the replacement of a number of Labour Force Standard Data Services with publications and a delay in the publication of a number of annual publications, resulting in the release of two additional annual issues in 1996-97.

**ABS RELEASES(a) CLASSIFIED BY SUBJECT MATTER AND FREQUENCY, 1995-96 AND  
1996-97  
(number)**

	Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	Other	Total
<b>Economic Finance Releases</b>					
(National Accounts, Balance of Payments, International Investment and Trade, Public and Private Finance)					
1995-96	13	55	35	2	105
1996-97	(b)24	57	47	6	134
<b>Industry Releases</b>					
(Agriculture, Mining, Manufacturing, Construction, Distribution, Transport, Service Industries, Science and Technology)					
1995-96	33	92	(c)255	19	(c)399
1996-97	57	93	272	22	444
<b>Population and Migration Releases</b>					
(Population Estimates, Projections, Census, Vital and Migration Statistics)					
1995-96	38	4	11	6	59
1996-97	39	4	13	9	65
<b>Labour Releases</b>					
(Labour Force, Employment Conditions, Prices, Household Income and Expenditure)					
1995-96	5	42	161	27	235
1996-97	(d)16	40	164	32	252
<b>Social Analysis Releases</b>					
(Education, Health, Welfare, Law, Order, Public Safety)					
1995-96	10	4	..	63	77
1996-97	12	4	..	44	60
<b>Other General Releases</b>					
1995-96	38	(c)14	146	109	(c)307
1996-97	45	22	138	112	317
<b>Total</b>					
<b>1995-96</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>(c)211</b>	<b>(c)608</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>(c)1 182</b>
<b>1996-97</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>1 272</b>

(a) Includes catalogue numbered publications and releases on microfiche, and floppy disk.

(b) Delay in the publication of a number of releases scheduled for 1995-96 resulted in publication during 1996-97.

(c) Revised.

(d) Increase due to the replacement of a number of labour force standard data sources with publications.



### ACCESS TO DISSEMINATION SERVICES

Service(a)	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Publications (subscribers)	11 176	10 956	11 244
PC-Ausstats (subscribers)	191	215	220
Internet Home Page (accesses)(b)	..	562 930	1 759 986
CAUL Internet (subscribers)(c)	20	38	33
International Trade (subscribers)(d)	110	1 003	1 104
DISCOVERY (ABS frames accessed)(e)	10 248	8 033	..
Telephone Inquiry Service (calls completed)	194 440	210 867	209 047
Dial-a-Statistic — 0055 (calls)	32 208	38 387	45 560
Library Extension Program (libraries)	554	560	529
Secondary providers (number)(f)	26	28	41

(a) Where the number of subscribers is shown this refers to 30 June.

(b) Service commenced on 1 July 1995.

(c) Service for University Libraries commenced in May 1995.

(d) Includes clients previously using Telestats service.

(e) Service discontinued 30 April 1996.

(f) Various organisations which are licensed to resell ABS data.

### REVENUE RAISED FROM STATISTICS (\$'000)

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Publications			
Subscriptions	2 599	2 401	2 233
Other (including bookshops)	1 508	1 473	1 496
Electronic Products	2 372	1 938	1 569
Information Consultancy	3 919	3 399	4 513
Statistical Consultancy	1 520	1 415	798
User Funded Surveys	6 169	9 261	8 757
Other Products and Services(a)	3 703	5 247	3 766
<b>Total</b>	<b>21 790</b>	<b>25 134</b>	<b>23 132</b>

(a) Includes special trade returns, user funding for statistical units, microfiche, outposted officer charges, seminar fees and paper-based products other than publications.

### TIME BETWEEN END OF REFERENCE PERIOD AND RELEASE OF DATA(a) (average number of elapsed days)

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Main economic indicator statistics			
Monthly	35	34	35
Quarterly	63	60	60
Other statistics			
Monthly	48	50	51
Quarterly	97	94	89
Annual	379	352	330

(a) Excludes releases of data from the Population Census which have an atypical pattern, and publications that predominantly contain data that have been previously released.

## REVIEW OF COMPONENTS

The remainder of this chapter reviews the activities and achievements of each component of the statistical operations sub-program during 1996-97 (except the support and 'business office' components which provide executive, secretarial and other support to their respective Divisions). The entries are in the order shown in Appendix 1 (ABS Program Structure).

### Client Services

The ABS Client Services component provides clients with a range of services including free supply of limited information that is quickly and routinely available, information consultancy on a fee for service basis for clients with more detailed or complex information needs, distribution of ABS publications and products in printed or electronic form through information consultancy, ABS Bookshops and through a subscription mailing service, and outposting of staff to other government agencies for specialist statistical assignments.

Information consultancies usually involve an interpretation of client needs, identification of relevant data to service those needs, and the extraction, analysis and formatting of appropriate information for the client. Customised information provided to clients typically consists of statistical tables, graphs, maps, commentary, or a combination of these. The service primarily deals in ABS data, but occasionally draws on information from other sources.

Client Managers have been established to improve service provision to Commonwealth and State governments, selected business sectors, education, libraries and the media.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- The telephone inquiry service handled 209,047 calls. With this service, the majority of inquiries are answered immediately and information is generally supplied free-of-charge.
- The recorded 'Dial-a-Statistic' telephone service, available 24 hours a day on a 0055 number, was used 45,560 times in 1996-97, an increase of 19 per cent on the number of accesses in 1995-96. The recorded message provides information about the Consumer Price Index, Balance of Payments, National Accounts, Labour Force, Average Weekly Earnings and Population Estimates.
- Information consultancies were undertaken in all ABS offices for a diverse range of clients and on a wide range of statistical topics. Consultancies to the value of \$4.513 million were provided in 1996-97. This was an increase of \$1.114 million from the previous year.
- Secondary distribution arrangements, enabling third parties to distribute ABS data to end users, increased during the year. Several contracts were negotiated with distributors of digital boundaries and other Census products.

- A number of strategic, short-term outposts were undertaken to various State Government agencies in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania to extend the use of ABS data within those organisations. These are additional to longer term outposts in several Commonwealth Government agencies.
- Substantial efforts were made to further raise awareness of ABS products and services in the education sector, including releasing a Census Schools Resource Kit and Video, improving the education pages on the ABS Statsite, and despatching a national Statpak 97 catalogue to schools in all States and Territories.

#### Library Services

The ABS Library Network (ABSLN), comprising the Central Office Library in Canberra and libraries in ABS offices in each State and the Northern Territory, provides access to statistical material to meet the information and research needs of ABS staff and the public. The network also delivers both priced and free of charge services to libraries across Australia, and plays an integral role in the ABS's information dissemination and information management strategies.

The ABSLN also manages the ABS Library Extension Program (LEP) which aims to improve community awareness of and access to the main findings and analysis of ABS collections. Through the LEP, the ABS makes its publications and some electronic services available on a complimentary basis to the National Library, State libraries, Parliamentary libraries, and to public and tertiary libraries across Australia. LEP library locations and other information useful for libraries and their clients is maintained on the ABS Statsite (<http://www.abs.gov.au>).

The Library also maintains a database of professional papers presented or published by ABS officers. A detailed list for 1996-97 is provided at Appendix 12.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- A comprehensive review of the LEP was undertaken and recommendations made to achieve a more effective and cost-efficient service.
- LEP membership dropped from 560 to 529 libraries. The majority of this reduction was attributable to the re-organisation of local government services in Victoria.
- Access to statistical and other information was improved through the use of online databases, the Internet and electronic mail.

#### Dissemination Services

Dissemination Services provides the ABS with printing and publishing services, including printed publications and electronic products and services. It is responsible for preparing the ABS's main catalogue of publications and for producing a range of other reference products such as *Year Book Australia* (ABS Cat no. 1301.0).

During 1996-97, the ABS produced some 326 publication titles, which equated to 1,272 individual publication releases. Publications range in size from a few pages containing monthly or quarterly key economic and social indicator series, to major 'thematic' volumes such as *Australian Social Trends* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0) which bring together data from different sources on particular topics of interest.

The expanding range of electronic products and services includes data available on floppy disk, magnetic tape and CD-ROM, data provided by e-mail and data available online via PC-Ausstats (which is an ABS database of over 100,000 time series) allowing users to download their own selection of data for further manipulation. The ABS Statsite (<http://www.abs.gov.au>) provides a wide range of information including statistical data, news releases, technical and conceptual information about ABS statistics, etc. Some 1.8 million accesses to the ABS Statsite occurred in 1996-97.

ABS publications are distributed through ABS bookshops located in all ABS Offices, through commercial distributors including Australian Government Publishing Service Bookshops, and through a subscription service. Printed and electronic catalogues and guides are produced to help clients.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Development of a comprehensive dissemination strategy for the ABS which proposes an approach to dissemination beyond the year 2000.
- Enhancement of the ABS Statsite homepage on the Internet.
- Development and progressive implementation of a range of publishing systems designed to improve consistency in the application of publishing standards and the efficiency of product generation in both paper and electronic formats.
- Continued improvement in ABS publications making them easier to read and understand, as a result of research undertaken by the Communications Research Institute of Australia.
- Trialled electronic delivery of ABS publications soon after the 11:30 am embargo, using Internet e-mail.
- Release of the *1996 Historical Publications on CD-ROM* (ABS Cat. no. 1124.0) containing all titles published by the ABS in 1996. The product incorporates abstracts describing each publication and hierarchically indexed searching capabilities to allow clients to find ABS publications and issues quickly and easily.

## Marketing and Public Relations

### Marketing

The marketing sub-component is responsible for the marketing and promotion of the broad capability of the ABS and its products and services. This includes developing and implementing market plans, and identifying market segments as a basis for achieving widespread use of ABS statistics. Information on advertising and market research costs is provided in Appendix 10.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- The development and implementation of a series of marketing and promotional plans including those for the 1996 Census.
- Market research to identify the needs of ABS clients, obtain feedback on existing products and services and establish the potential market for specific products.
- The production of three issues of *What Figures...*, a mail order catalogue which brings new and significant releases to the attention of ABS clients.
- Continued release of *Census Update*, a newsletter which informs clients about progress throughout the Population Census cycle and about information available from the Census.

### Media and Public Relations

The aim of the media and public relations sub-component is to ensure that there is good communication between the ABS and the media, politicians, other opinion leaders, providers of information to statistical collections, and the community in general.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Implementation of a strategic communication plan for the data collection phase of the August 1996 Census of Population and Housing and development of an awareness campaign for the release of the data in July 1997.
- Development of external communication principles and guidelines.
- Continuation of the targeting of all outlets of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia to encourage awareness of ABS activities and services to ethnic and Indigenous groups.
- Continued media liaison, media events and briefing of journalists to encourage prominent print, radio and television reporting of the ABS, its collections and publications.

- Continued media training and media awareness courses, including a specific program associated with the 1996 Census, aimed at developing competent ABS spokespersons for ABS staff in all offices.
- Production of the in-house information magazine *ABS News*.

#### National Accounts

The national accounts component produces statistics which form the core of the Australian system of national accounts. These statistics summarise, in a systematic and comprehensive way, the economic transactions that take place within the Australian economy and between Australia and the rest of the world. The usefulness of the accounts derives largely from the way in which data from a number of sources are brought together and presented in a conceptually consistent way, both for a given period and over time. At present, Australia's national accounts essentially accord with the recommendations contained in the 1968 issue of the United Nations' *A System of National Accounts* (SNA). The September quarter 1998 accounts are expected to be released in accordance with the 1993 issue of the SNA (SNA93).

Senior staff of the component attend meetings of the Joint Economic Forecasting Group to provide advice on the statistics used as input to the forecasting process.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Significant developmental work designed to improve Australia's national accounts including upgrading of source data, the introduction of revised international standards for national accounts set out in SNA93, including the development of chain linked volume estimates for GDP and its components, and the development of constant price input-output tables.
- The presentation of eight papers arising from this work at various conferences during 1996-97, including the Asia Pacific Tourism Association Annual Conference (Townsville, September 1996), the Australian and New Zealand Regional Science Association Conference (Canberra, September 1996), the Measurement of Capital Stock Conference (Canberra, March 1997), the Service Sector Productivity and the Productivity Paradox meeting (Ottawa, April 1997), the Fourth London Group Meeting on Environmental Accounting (Ottawa, June 1997) and the annual OECD Meeting on National Accounts (Paris, June 1997).
- The hosting in Canberra of an international conference entitled 'The Measurement of Capital Stock' in March 1997. The five day conference was attended by representatives from many national and international statistical organisations and covered both conceptual and empirical issues. An important outcome of the conference was the agreement to develop an international manual on capital stock measurement.

- The release of *Australian National Accounts: National Balance Sheet* (ABS Cat. no. 5241.0) as a regular component of the Australian national accounts. The publication included, for the first time, balance sheets for the four domestic sectors (corporate trading enterprises, financial enterprises, households, and general government). The publication also included experimental estimates of the value of some of Australia's natural resources (subsoil assets, timber and land).
- The publication (in the September quarter 1996 national accounts publication) of articles addressing the relationship between the growth in productivity and the growth in real factor incomes, and analysing the effect of the good farm season in 1995-96 and the impact it had on the economy as a whole.
- The revamp of input-output publications. Two sets of input-output tables were published. Tables for 1992-93 (the first set of tables on an ANZSIC basis) were published in August 1996 and tables for 1993-94 were published in June 1997.
- Continued work on implementation of the recommendations of the detailed review of input-output statistics to better integrate these data with those in the national income, expenditure and product accounts. This work is being conducted in tandem with work on the implementation of the new international standards set out in SNA93 and both streams should be completed in 1998.
- Further development of the computer processing system used to produce the quarterly and annual national accounts using a time-series system produced by Fame Information Services. When fully implemented in 1997-98, the on-line graphics capability of the new system is expected to significantly strengthen checking processes as an integral part of the compilation process.

#### International Accounts

The international accounts component produces statistics and related information on the balance of payments, international trade in services and the international investment position. It also participates with other government agencies in the work of the Joint Economic Forecasting Group, through its Balance of Payments Sub-Committee. Balance of payments and international investment position statistics are published monthly (some components), quarterly and annually.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Continued work on implementation of the revised international standards for balance of payments and international investment position statistics contained in the fifth edition of the International Monetary Fund's *Balance of Payments Manual* and the 1993 *System of National Accounts*. These new standards will be incorporated in the September quarter 1997 release.

- A review, and subsequent discontinuation, of the monthly balance of payments publication, and its replacement with a new monthly publication *International Trade in Goods and Services* (ABS Cat. no. 5368.0).
- The collection of more detailed international trade in services statistics, and a review, in conjunction with the Department of Employment, Education Training and Youth Affairs, of the data and methodology used to estimate the foreign student component of travel services credits.
- Continued work on feasibility studies into collecting quarterly inward and outward investment data from custodians (covering both flows and positions at market value), and from share registries in respect of holdings of shares by non-residents.
- The leadership and co-ordination of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Trade and Investment Data Review Project (for the first part of the year).
- Continued contributions to the work of the International Monetary Fund's Balance of Payments Committee and its Expert Group on financial derivatives, aimed at improving the measurement and international comparability of balance of payments and monetary statistics.

#### International Trade

The international trade component produces statistics on the value, composition, destination and source of Australia's merchandise exports and imports. The statistics are available in a range of output media, including publications, floppy disk, magnetic cartridge, e-mail and paper reports, and through special returns which provide regular information on specific commodities, tailored to the needs of individual clients.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of a new monthly publication, *International Merchandise Imports* (ABS Cat. no. 5439.0)
- Completion of a bilateral reconciliation of Australia's merchandise trade flows with the United States of America, for the 1994 calendar year, and publication of the results in the September quarter 1996 issue of *International Merchandise Trade, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5422.0).
- Publication, in the September quarter 1996 issue of *International Merchandise Trade, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5422.0), of an article outlining the differences between two classifications for international trade statistics, 'ANZSIC and TREC — Two views of trade'.





*Financial markets are key users of ABS data. Chris Caton (left), Vice-President (Dept of Economists) at Bankers Trust, hosted a visit to Bankers Trust's trading room in Sydney for John Cornish (right) First Assistant Statistician of the ABS' Information Services Division, and Paul Molloy (second left), ABS National Account Manager for the Finance Section.*

- Revision of the release practices to enable the release, in a manner consistent with legal requirements, of more information than had been achieved previously.
- Introduction of new statistical codes to assist Australia's requirement to report trade in certain chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention Office.
- Assistance to the Department of Statistics, Malaysia on the setting up of an international trade statistics database.

## Prices

The prices component is responsible for compiling the consumer price index (CPI), a range of producer and international trade price indexes, and development work on the measurement of productivity, which requires improved measures of outputs and inputs in real terms.

The CPI measures the change each quarter in the cost of purchasing a fixed basket of consumer goods and services. House price indexes compiled for use in calculating the mortgage interest charges component of the CPI are also published. The producer and international trade price indexes include price indexes of inputs and outputs of manufacturing industry, materials used in the building industry, exports and imports.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of an information paper, *An Analytical Framework for Price Indexes in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6421.0) proposing repositioning of all price measures in Australia into a coherent framework, as well as developing new economy-wide indexes designed specifically to measure inflation. Wide consultation indicates broad user support for the proposals.
- Commencement of the 13th Series CPI review. An information paper, *Issues to be Considered during the 13th Series Australian Consumer Price Index Review* (ABS Cat. no. 6451.0) was released on 9 May 1997 to provide a basis for user consultation during the review process. The ABS also established a CPI Advisory Group, comprising a broad cross section of key users, to assist in undertaking this review. The outcome of the review will be announced in an Information Paper to be released in March 1998 and the new 13th Series CPI will be introduced in respect of the March quarter 1998.
- Substantial completion of redevelopment work on the computer processing systems used to calculate the consumer and producer price indexes. The December quarter 1996 CPI was the first index to be processed on the new system.

- Continuation of work on the development of producer price indexes for the output of transport and property service industries, and commencement of work developing price indexes on a selection of the wide range of business service industries, as part of a long term program to provide an expanded range of price indexes for the services sector.

#### Financial Accounts

The financial accounts component produces, as part of the Australian system of national accounts, statistics on the financial profile of each sector of the economy and on the markets for various categories of financial instruments. Information on inter-sectoral financial transactions is also provided.

The component also produces statistics on the lending activity and balance sheets of financial institutions such as banks, building societies, finance companies, credit unions, unit trusts and superannuation funds.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of more detail from the survey of superannuation, in conjunction with the Insurance and Superannuation Commission.
- Continued negotiations with data providers to collect financial information according to the revised international standards for financial accounts statistics contained in the 1993 *System of National Accounts*.
- Development and release of a new monthly publication *Lending Finance, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 5671.0) summarising key findings of surveys on housing, personal, commercial and lease finance.

#### Public Sector Accounts

The public sector accounts component produces information on revenue, outlays, financing transactions and financial assets and liabilities of the Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments, and their trading enterprises. In addition to a range of annual publications, quarterly statistics are compiled for inclusion in the national accounts, and detailed financial statistics about individual local government authorities are provided on request. The component provides advice on the statistics used as input to the forecasting work of the Public Sector Subcommittee of the Joint Economic Forecasting Group.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ABS and the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC) which sets out agreed arrangements for the integrated collection of data for Government Finance Statistics (GFS) and the CGC Standard Budget. These arrangements will result in a reduction in respondent load and an improvement in the quality and consistency of both ABS and CGC data.

- Participation in the deliberations of the Fiscal Reporting Committee (FRC), which advised Heads of Treasury on issues affecting the adoption of accrual principles in 'whole of government' accounting (accounting standard AAS31) and GFS, and the alignment of these two reporting frameworks. The FRC also made recommendations concerning the updating of the agreement on uniform statistical presentation in government budget documentation.
- Publication of an Information Paper *Developments in Government Finance Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 5516.0), which provides information on a range of recent and forthcoming developments in GFS, the most significant being a proposed shift from a cash to an accruals basis of reporting.
- Conduct of the fourth Government Finance Statistics Conference involving Commonwealth and State Treasuries and the Commonwealth Department of Finance, as well as the CGC. This conference addressed issues related to the classification and coordination of GFS.

## Agriculture

The main elements of the agriculture component are the conduct of an annual commodity census and its associated supplementary collections, a monthly collection of livestock slaughterings, a monthly collection of wool receivals by brokers and dealers, and an annual agricultural finance survey. The agriculture component also produces a range of derived statistics, including estimates of the value of agricultural commodities produced and the apparent consumption of foodstuffs and nutrients.

Senior staff participate in the Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee which meets in Melbourne several times each year.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of the 1995-96 agricultural census with earlier release of statistics than for the previous two censuses. Funding provided by users enabled the collection of detailed data on apples, pears and grape varieties. A range of national environment-related data were collected for the National Collaborative Project on Indicators for Sustainable Agriculture.
- Development, collection and release of first estimates from the 1996-97 agricultural census. User funding was provided to collect information on farm forestry and fencing nationally, and environment related data for Victoria.
- A substantial reduction in the content of the annual agricultural census to meet the Government requirement that the ABS reduce substantially the statistical reporting load placed on small businesses.
- Release of preliminary results from the 1995-96 agricultural finance survey in January 1997, prior to the National Agricultural and Resources Outlook Conference.

- Expanded collection, in the 1995–96 agricultural finance survey, of data on expenditure on land management, adding to data available on the environment.
- Investigation of survey design options for future agriculture collections, following the decision of the Government to fund a full census only every five years, with a large sample survey in other years.
- Release of *Agriculture, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 7113.0), which is a compendium publication on the structure of the Australian farming sector.

## Mining

The mining component conducts annual surveys of the mining, electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries. The collections provide data on the structure, operations and output of the industries. Quarterly collections of actual and expected mineral and petroleum exploration are also undertaken.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of preliminary results from the 1995–96 census of mining establishments in January 1997, before the National Agricultural and Resources Outlook Conference.
- Development and conduct of additional surveys of construction material mining, mineral exploration, petroleum exploration and other mining services.
- Further development and conduct of a water and sewerage survey as part of the 1995–96 utilities census.
- Presentation of a paper "Statistical Comparison of Oil and Gas with Other Industries" to the 1997 Conference of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association.
- Inclusion of supplementary questions, in the June quarter 1996 mineral exploration collection, about overseas exploration expenditure by Australian resident companies and exploration drilling methods. These questions were funded by users of the data.
- Development and publication of seasonally adjusted and trend estimates for mineral exploration.
- Inclusion of regional data in the quarterly petroleum exploration publications.

## Manufacturing

The manufacturing component provides statistics on the structure, performance and production of the manufacturing industry. Data collected and disseminated include commodity production statistics, quarterly indexes of industrial production, and extensive statistics on

the structure, financial operations, performance and other characteristics of manufacturing industry. The latter set of statistics is obtained from an annual manufacturing industry survey.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Improvements to collection methods for data on industry performance, industry costs and production. In particular, improved sample design of surveys to obtain more detailed cost profiles and more frequent information on value of commodities produced will support improvements to the quality of the annual and quarterly national accounts.
- Reductions in provider load, both in overall terms and individual (especially small) businesses, through changes in sample design.
- Rationalisation of the range of data collected and wider application of user pays principles in the commodity production collections. These series will in future be published quarterly.
- Improvements in data collection and processing arrangements, which have considerably improved the timeliness of the release of the 1995-96 manufacturing survey statistics.
- A review of the annual manufacturing survey which will lead to more efficient processing and some further gains in timeliness.

## Construction

The construction component produces statistics on the structure, performance and other characteristics of the construction industry, and timely indicators of activity for the three components of construction: residential building, non-residential building and engineering construction. The sources of data include monthly building approvals and dwelling commencements reported by approving authorities, and quarterly surveys of building activity and engineering construction. The ABS also conducts a construction industry survey approximately every five years to provide measures of the structure of the construction industry as a whole.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Continued improvement in the quality of preliminary estimates of building activity provided for inclusion in the quarterly national accounts.
- Introduction, in conjunction with the Building Control Commission of Victoria, of central electronic reporting of building approvals data for Victoria
- Continuation of development work for the next construction industry survey, which will be conducted in respect of 1996-97.

- Major improvements to the processing systems used to process building data.
- Cessation of building commencements statistics for all States and Territories (except Western Australia and South Australia) because of quality concerns. For Western Australia and South Australia, users of the data will in future meet the costs of data collection, including the costs of bringing the data up to acceptable standards.

## Transport

The transport component provides monthly and annual statistics on new motor vehicle registrations and quarterly statistics on freight movements by rail, sea and air. It undertakes surveys of motor vehicle use and associated motor vehicle censuses, which will be conducted on a quarterly and annual basis respectively from 1997-98 onward. Other activities include compilation of compendium publications and directories of transport statistics.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of results from the *1995 Survey of Motor Vehicle Use* (ABS Cat. no. 9208.0).
- Publication of a new compendium of motor vehicle statistics *Motor Vehicles in Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 9311.0).
- Completion of a methodological review of the survey of motor vehicle use. The recommendations of this review are to be implemented in a new quarterly survey commencing in the September quarter 1997.
- Publication of results from the *1995 Motor Vehicle Census, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 9309.0).
- The suspension, on quality grounds, of road freight statistics pending development of a viable new methodology.

## Tourism

The tourism component produces quarterly statistics on capacity and demand for tourist accommodation in Australia. Other activities include the development and promotion of statistical frameworks and classifications, production of a quarterly analytical publication *Tourism Indicators, Australia*, (ABS Cat. no. 8634.0) and occasional production of a directory of tourism statistics.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Review of the content and design of the survey of tourist accommodation to meet the Government requirement that the ABS substantially reduce the statistical reporting load placed on small business, and to meet funding reductions arising from the 1997 Budget.
- Publication of the *1997 Directory of Tourism Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1130.0).
- Conduct of supplementary collections and publication of results from the survey of inbound tour operators (in ABS Cat. no. 8690.0) and survey of information technology usage by tourism accommodation establishments (published in ABS Cat. no. 8634.0).
- Research work leading to a proposal to compile a Tourism Satellite Account for Australia.
- Update of the *Framework for the Collection and Publication of Tourism Statistics* to incorporate new international standards and recommendations of the Bureau of Tourism Research Review of Australian Tourism Statistics.

#### Service (including Retail) Industries

The service industries component produces statistics on the size, structure, operations and output of a variety of service industries.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of a first publication on gambling industries in respect of 1994-95 (published in ABS Cat. no. 8684.0).
- Release of publications from the 1994-95 sport and recreation industries survey (published in ABS Cat. nos. 8686.0 and 8688.0).
- Release of a publication on the casino industry in respect of 1995-96 (published in ABS Cat. no. 8683.0).
- Release of a first publication on private medical practice industry, in respect of 1994-95 (published in ABS Cat. no. 8685.0).
- Completion of a survey of the community services industry in respect of 1995-96.
- Completion of a survey of selected business service industries in respect of 1995-96.
- Methodological research and user consultation in relation to proposed surveys, to be conducted in respect of 1996-97, of the film, video, radio and television services industries, telecommunications, travel agency services, waste management and cultural industries.



## Retail

The retail survey sub-component undertakes the monthly retail trade survey, which provides data on retail turnover by State and industry. As well as being important in its own right as an indicator of economic activity, retail turnover forms a substantial component of private final consumption expenditure measures in the national accounts.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduction of an improved program of retailer interviews to complement the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) collection system.
- Introduction of new CATI software, compatible with the ABS computing environment and providing greater flexibility for interviewers.
- In response to general interest in gambling impacts on retailing, release of an article titled "Contribution of Gambling to Monthly Retail Trade Estimates" in the October 1996 release of *Retail Trade, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 8501.0).
- Publication of a technical note analysing the effects of Father's Day on the retail time series in the December 1996 edition of *Australian Economic Indicators* (ABS Cat. no. 1350.0).

## Economy Wide Statistics

The economy wide statistics component is responsible for a range of annual statistics on the financial operations and performance of businesses in all industries of the Australian economy. The component also conducts a quarterly survey of expectations of short and medium term business performance, which covers all business sizes and all parts of the economy except agriculture and general government.

Major activities and achievements during the year included:

- Conduct of the sixth annual economic activity survey, in respect of 1995-96. An expanded sample size enabled more reliable industry statistics to be produced at a detailed level.
- Completion of an evaluation of the business expectations survey, as part of the Portfolio Evaluation Program. Users of the data strongly confirmed the importance of the ABS continuing this survey, recognising its present and potential uses, which will be enhanced as the survey continues and further analysis of reported data becomes possible. As a result of the review, work to improve the form design and incorporate realisation analyses in the publication commenced.

Business Statistics

Investment and Profits Surveys

The investment and profits surveys sub-component produces indicators of current and future economic activity through the publication of quarterly estimates of company profits, new capital expenditure, stocks, and manufacturers' and wholesalers' sales.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Progressive introduction of State stratification to each of the sub-component's surveys. This will ultimately improve the reliability and availability of estimates for smaller States and Territories.
- Development work to support the progressive expansion of the existing survey of stocks and manufacturers' and wholesalers' sales to provide an ongoing quarterly measure of performance of the service industries sector.
- Conduct of a survey of businesses that have recently registered for group employer purposes to assess their characteristics, and whether an adjustment is needed to the methodology under which estimates for newly commenced businesses are made each quarter in the surveys of new capital expenditure, stocks and sales, and employment and earnings.
- Further investigations into the feasibility of replacing the existing quarterly surveys of new capital expenditure, stocks and sales, company profits, and employment and earnings with a single, quarterly, economic activity survey. Investigations completed included a small pilot test of a form containing most of the items currently sought separately. The results of this test were positive in terms of both provider load and timeliness. A program of further tests, aimed at assessing other aspects, has been scheduled for 1997-98.

Income Tax

This sub-component is responsible for enhancing the way the ABS uses income tax data, provided by the Australian Taxation Office under the *Income Tax Assessment Act*, for statistical purposes. In response to the recommendations of the Small Business Deregulation Task Force, this initiative has been given a high priority by both agencies and is an important element of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by both agencies in December 1996.

Aggregated income tax data have been used in the compilation of various components of the annual national accounts for some time. The introduction of the input-output approach to the compilation of annual national accounts means that use of income tax data is required in a more disaggregated form. A trial involving the use of income tax data in this way to supplement data collected in the annual economic activity survey commenced in 1996-97.

Investigations into making greater use of income tax data as an alternative to direct collection by the ABS also commenced in respect of some industry surveys (e.g. the retail census and construction industry survey) and regional economic statistics.

#### **Small Business**

The small business component produces a range of data about the size, structure and performance of small and medium sized businesses to assist policy makers, researchers and the community to understand the behaviour of the sector.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of results from the first survey (relating to 1994-95) in the small business longitudinal study (published in ABS Cat. no. 8141.0).
- Conduct of the second survey (relating to 1995-96) in the small business longitudinal study.
- Conduct in February 1997 of a household survey on the characteristics of small businesses and their operators. Results are expected to be released early in 1997-98 (published in ABS Cat. no. 8127.0).

#### **Science and Technology**

The science and technology component provides statistics on research and experimental development (R&D), innovation and information technology.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of the results of the 1994-95 R&D surveys for higher education organisations, and for the general government and private non-profit sectors (in ABS Cat. nos. 8111.0 and 8109.0).
- The conduct of, and publication of the results from, the 1995-96 R&D surveys for the higher education and business enterprise sectors (published in ABS Cat. nos. 8111.0 and 8104.0)
- Development of the surveys of innovative activities in the manufacturing, mining, agriculture and private construction sectors to be conducted in respect of 1996-97.
- Publication of results from the 1993-94 surveys of information technology use in the general government and business enterprise sectors (in ABS Cat. nos. 8119.0 and 8129.0).
- Publication of results from the February 1996 household survey on the use of information technology and telecommunications (IT&T) (in ABS Cat. no. 8128.0).

- Publication of preliminary results from the 1995-96 survey of IT&T producers and distributors (in ABS Cat. no. 8143.0).
- Contributions to the development of statistical standards for science and technology statistics within OECD countries, most notably in the fields of innovation and information technology statistics.

## Environment

The environment component provides a focus for ABS statistical activities (data collection, analysis and publication) concerned with environment statistics and environmental accounting. For these fields, the component co-ordinates client inquiries and provides access to ABS data holdings, statistical expertise, and industry and household collections.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of the first resource accounts in *Energy Accounts for Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4604.0).
- Publication of *Australian Agriculture and the Environment* (ABS Cat. no. 4606.0), which explores the issues associated with sustainable agriculture.
- Publication of *Australian Transport and the Environment* (ABS Cat. no. 4605.0) for World Environment Day 1997. This thematic compendium publication examines road, rail, shipping and air transport activities, and their environmental impact and societal responses.
- Publication of results from a March/April 1996 household survey in *Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices* (ABS Cat. no. 4602.0). This survey covered environmental views and concerns, recycling practices, motor vehicle maintenance and use of transport.
- Publication of the third edition of *Environment Protection Expenditure, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4603.0), which provides estimates on environment protection expenditures for private and public sectors and households for 1992-93 and 1993-94.
- As part of the development of environmental and resource accounts, preparation and circulation of scoping papers covering minerals, forests, fish and water. Data gathering activities for these accounts commenced.
- Development of the next annual household survey on environmental issues, to be conducted in March 1998, including the first pilot test.
- Development of the 1996-97 economic data collections for the environmental protection expenditure accounts, including development of a collection for the waste disposal services industry.

## Classification (economic)

The classification component develops and maintains standard economic classifications and promotes their use to ensure compatibility and comparability of data across collections and over time. The component produces documents and publications on the classifications, develops and maintains computer-based coding systems, concordances, and indexes and provides advice, training and consulting services.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Commodity Classification (ANZSCC) coder. This electronic coder will assist users to code goods and services to the appropriate ANZSCC categories.
- Release of the Purchasing Australia Commodity Coder. This tailored electronic coder, based on the ANZSCC, was specifically developed to facilitate electronic purchasing in the Commonwealth Public Sector.
- Release of the second edition of *Statistical Concepts Reference Library on CD-ROM* (ABS Cat. no. 1361.0.30.001). The Library includes concepts, sources and methods for the national accounts, population estimates, balance of payments, government finance statistics, and price indexes as well as the 1996 Census Dictionary and the following standard classifications: industry, occupation, religious groups, languages and countries.
- Investigations into requirements for views of 'industry' different from that provided by the ANZSIC.
- Implementation, on the Business Register, of the new Standard Institutional Sector Classification of Australia.
- Continued assistance to the United Nations in the development of the Central Product Classification, which is the international classification of goods and services.

## Standards and Methods

The standards sub-component develops, maintains and promotes the use of standard units, data items and other concepts, which in turn helps to ensure the compatibility and comparability of data across statistical collections. The sub-component issues papers and publications on these standards and provides advice, assistance and training in their use. It also approves ABS business survey questionnaires.

The large business unit sub-component profiles large businesses and updates their structures on the ABS Business Register. The sub-component also undertakes a coordinated despatch and collection of annual survey forms for a sub-set of these businesses. For the largest businesses, it validates reported data across selected surveys.

The common frame unit sub-component has been established to create, validate and maintain a regular series of consistent frames from the ABS Business Register for use in surveys. The sub-component monitors demographic information about businesses on the register, produces counts of businesses not yet on frames to enable the calculation of new business provisions, and confirms the reporting basis of certain units that are selected in surveys for the first time.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Expansion of questionnaire approval to cover all ABS business surveys, which will further rationalise and standardise data items.
- Continued development of unit aspects of the information model to be implemented for the new ABS Business Register.
- Continued implementation of recommendations arising from a major review of factors contributing to inconsistencies in statistical output from ABS business collections.
- Implementation of expanded profiling functions and populations, following a review of the maintenance strategy for the ABS Business Register.
- Expansion of 'key provider management' to a greater number of businesses, with the objective of reducing inconsistencies between statistical outputs. An evaluation of key provider management was completed and the implementation of recommendations from the review commenced.
- Further development and testing of a business reporting model aimed at reducing provider load and improving the quality of economic statistics produced by business collections.
- Formation of the Common Frame Unit and work on the development of agreements, systems and procedures for the creation, validation and maintenance of common frames and other functions to be performed.

#### Business Register

The business register component is responsible for the maintenance of the ABS central register of businesses. Over 950,000 businesses and their relationships are recorded on the register. About one million changes are made to the register each year. The register plays a key role in integrating economic statistics by providing consistent population frameworks for ABS surveys of businesses.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Extended use of data provided by the Australian Taxation Office for updating the business register.

- Improved quality assurance program for the business register.
- Continuation of a project, in association with Fujitsu, to redevelop the business register systems to provide greater efficiencies and to take advantage of modern technologies.

## SPEED

SPEED (standard processing environment for economic data) is the ABS standard computer processing environment for a range of statistical collections. The environment is based on client/server architectures (facilitating desk-top access to greater computing power), relational databases, graphical interfaces and user-friendly tools. During 1996-97, SPEED was used by almost 30 ABS collections. The remaining economic collections, along with many of the household collections, will migrate to the SPEED environment over the next few years.

Activity and achievements during the year involved the development of a generalised estimation package, improved links to the ABS Data Base and corporate information systems, and data views. This work will result in reduced overall collection development and maintenance costs within SPEED.

## Geography

The geography component is responsible for developing and maintaining geographic products and services for use within the ABS, government agencies and private businesses. Activities include the production of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) and associated products, provision of Geographic Information System, geocoding, and mapping services to the ABS, and continuing development of the ABS's annual regional statistics CD-ROM product, the Integrated Regional Data Base (IRDB).

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of Version 4 of *Integrated Regional Data Base* (ABS Cat. no. 1353.0) with updated data series and an option to purchase separate data modules.
- Approval of plans for the redevelopment of the IRDB to provide a standard ABS platform for disseminating spatial statistics and to improve the flexibility and timeliness of data delivery to clients.
- Update of *Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1216.0) and release of a new manual with a simplified explanation of ASGC structures and, for the first time, colour maps of the main structures down to statistical local area level.
- Update of the *National Localities Index*, which allows users to code addresses to the ASGC using the suburb or locality name.
- Continued investigations into costs and benefits of, and approaches to, geocoding the ABS Business Register.

## Census

The census component develops and conducts the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The results are used to revise population estimates for each of the States and Territories, and to provide detailed statistics on the population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small groups within the population. These statistics are used for electoral purposes, for the distribution of government funds and for a variety of planning, administration and policy activities of government, business and other users.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Successful conduct of the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, which was held on 6 August 1996. The post enumeration survey showed that the level of under-enumeration improved from 1.8% in the 1991 Census to 1.6% in the 1996 Census.
- Conduct of a highly successful public relations campaign to raise community awareness and support for the Census.
- The recruitment and payment of over 40,000 census field staff over a short period of time.
- On schedule processing of census data and the introduction of a successful continuous data quality improvement program.
- Completion of plans for the development and marketing of 1996 Census products and services.
- Release of *Census Dictionary* (ABS Cat. no. 2901.0), *Statistical Geography: Volume 1 — Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (ABS Cat. no. 1216.0), *Census of Population and Housing: Collection District and Statistical Local Area Reference Maps, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 2920.0), and *Digital Boundaries* (ABS Cat. no. 2923.0).
- Commissioning of market research into community attitudes towards privacy and disposal of census forms. The research was undertaken in September 1996.
- Completion of a performance audit on the Census by the Australian National Audit Office. The audit report, tabled in Parliament on 3 June 1997, concluded that "the part of the 1996 Census cycle completed this far ... has been generally carried out efficiently and effectively by the ABS".

## Demography

The demography component produces estimates of the total population by age, sex, birthplace, marital status and geographical distribution, estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and estimates of households and the household population. Regular statistics are also produced on births, deaths, marriages, divorces, overseas arrivals and departures, and internal migration. Projections of the population according to specified



demographic assumptions are published on a regular basis and produced for individual clients.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Conduct and processing of a post-enumeration survey for the 1996 Census of Population and Housing to measure the extent of the net undercount of persons and households in the Census.
- Publication of estimates of State and Territory populations from 1991 to 1996 based on the results of the 1996 Census and post-enumeration survey.
- Release of *Australian Demographic Trends, 1997* (ABS Cat. no. 3102.0), a major study of changes that have occurred in Australia's population throughout this century, particularly during the last 20 years.
- Completion of a review of the demography program which set directions for future work and which involved extensive user consultation.
- Completion of an evaluation of administrative data sources for use in the quarterly estimation of interstate migration between 1996 and 2001. The results were discussed and accepted at the 1996 Commonwealth-State Population Workshop.
- Development of new regression models for the estimation of post-censal statistical local area populations.
- The conclusion of arrangements with the Australian Actuary for the joint production of life tables.

#### National Statistical Centres

The National Centres were established to provide leadership and guidance to departments and agencies at Commonwealth and State levels and to non-government organisations on the analysis, reporting and dissemination of statistics about Crime and Justice (including crime victimisation, reported crime, criminal courts and corrections), Culture, Recreation and Sport (including attendance, participation and activity), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (including the status of their health and welfare).

Activities and achievements by the Centres during the year included:

#### Crime and Justice

- Completion of the review of the Australian National Classification of Offences, and the re-issue of this classification as the Australian Standard Offence Classification.

- Completion of a requirements review for national corrective services statistics.
- Participation in the Police, Courts and Corrections Working Groups for the Commonwealth State Service Provision Review.

#### Culture and Recreation

- Production of reports for the Ministerial Working Groups on Australia's balance of trade in culture, measuring the economic impact of festivals, culture funding by governments in Australia, and the business of sport and recreation in South Australia.
- Release of the first publication *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities, Australia, 1995-96* (ABS Cat. no. 4177.0).
- Development of the first ABS economic survey of libraries, museums and the arts.
- Conduct of a survey of businesses involved in music.

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics

- Release of the compendium publication *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (ABS Cat. no. 4704.0) produced jointly with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- Release of a variety of publications based on the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey including a publication for each State and Territory (ABS Cat. nos. 4190.1-4190.7), a *Social Atlas* (ABS Cat. no. 4155.0), *Health of Indigenous Australians* (ABS Cat. no. 4395.0), *Housing Characteristics and Conditions* (ABS Cat. no. 4187.0), and *Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland* (ABS Cat. no. 4179.3).
- Conduct of a national workshop in Brisbane in November 1996 to improve the identification of Indigenous people in administrative data collections. The workshop proceedings were reported in *Indigenous Identification in Administrative Data Collections: Best Practice and Quality Assurance: Report on Workshop Proceedings*.

#### Labour Statistics

The labour component provides information on the composition and characteristics of the labour force, operations of the labour market, earnings and other conditions of employment, and issues relating to education and training.

Labour force statistics, collected in a monthly survey of households, provide timely estimates of employment and unemployment, together with basic demographic data to enable various characteristics of the employed and unemployed to be analysed. In addition, supplementary surveys are run in conjunction with the labour force survey to collect more detailed data on specific labour market issues.

Topics covered by supplementary surveys in 1996-97 included job search experience of unemployed persons, successful and unsuccessful job search experience, employment benefits, trade union membership, persons not in the labour force, underemployment, career experience, characteristics of migrants, and labour force experience. Related education topics were also covered, including educational attainment and transition from education to work.

The labour component also conducts a range of employer surveys which provide quarterly data on employed wage and salary earners, average weekly earnings, and job vacancies and overtime. It produces biennial data on the distribution and composition of employee earnings and hours, and periodic data on employers' labour costs. At irregular intervals it produces data on employers' expenditure on training and employers' training practices. The component also produces monthly statistics on industrial disputes.

In conjunction with the Australian Education Council, annual statistics on schools, students and staff are collected, evaluated and published.

A senior ABS officer is outposted on a full-time basis to the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) in recognition of the Department's considerable needs for labour market statistics and the importance of facilitating its access to, and understanding of the data.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of results from both the first and second 'waves' of the longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns. This survey is following a panel of respondents over a three year period to provide information about the dynamics of the labour market.
- Publication of first results from the 1996 survey of aspects of literacy (in ABS Cat. no. 4226.0).
- Publication of *Education and Training in Australia, 1996* (ABS Cat. no. 4224.0).
- Publication of a number of short articles on specific aspects of the Australian labour market in *The Labour Force, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 6203.0). Topics covered included recent trends in labour force participation, older workers, families and the labour force, trends in the Australian labour market, the effect of telephone interviewing on labour force survey estimates, trends in self employment, and dual earner couples.
- Establishment of a Labour Statistics Advisory Group to advise on labour statistics developments and priorities.
- Development and conduct of the 1997 survey of education and training, the third such household survey conducted by ABS. The survey collected detailed information on participation in, and outcomes from, education and training in Australia.

- Development and conduct of the 1996 training expenditure survey and the 1997 training practices survey.
- Continued development of a new quarterly index of labour costs, with initialisation of the index sample completed in April 1997.
- In association with DEETYA, development of an international (OECD) reference manual to provide guidance on the collection of training statistics from employers and households.
- Conduct of a project to investigate the quality of existing data collections of education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Social Statistics

This component is responsible for social analysis and for providing information on health, welfare, housing, and household income and expenditure. The component produces reports describing social conditions in Australia, and the social well-being of the population and special population groups (such as women, children, youth, aged persons and families). The component also produces statistics on the income, expenditure and other characteristics of households, and on the economic and social aspects of housing. It is responsible for promoting standard statistical concepts, definitions and classifications in the areas of household income, expenditure, economic well-being and housing. It also produces statistics on health (including causes of death, health status and risk factors, use of health services by the population, and statistics about private health establishments) and welfare (including statistics about disability, ageing and carers, voluntary work, child care, time use, and population groups such as people with a disability, aged persons, families and children).

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of the fourth edition of *Australian Social Trends* (ABS Cat. no. 4102.0) and the third edition of the *Australian Women's Year Book* (ABS Cat. no. 4124.0).
- Publication of results from the 1996 women's safety survey (in ABS Cat. no. 4128.0). The survey collected information on women's personal safety and their experiences of violence.
- Publication of *Deaths Due to Diseases and Cancers of the Respiratory System, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 3314.0) *Firearms Deaths, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4397.0) and *National Health Survey: First Results* (ABS Cat. no. 4392.0).
- Publication of the second edition of *Housing, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 1320.0).
- Publication of results from the 1994-95 survey of income and housing costs (in ABS Cat. no. 4130.0).

- Publication of results from the 1996 child care survey (in ABS Cat. no. 4402.0).
- Conduct, jointly with the Department of Health and Family Services, of a national nutrition survey in conjunction with the national health survey. First results are expected to be released in late 1997.
- Development and commencement of the conduct of a survey to measure the prevalence of specific mental disorders, the disablement associated with these disorders, the use made of health and human services, and consequently, the level of met and unmet need.
- Development and commencement of field work of the second national time use survey, which will obtain information on daily time use patterns including time spent on unpaid household and voluntary work.
- Development of the 1998 survey of disability, ageing and carers, to obtain information on people with a disability and their needs for care and support.
- Convening of the inaugural meeting of an international expert working group on the development of standards for household income distribution statistics.

Population Surveys (includes Population  
Data Standards)

The population surveys component services other statistical components by providing classifications and other data standards for use in all population statistics. The component also develops, conducts and processes the ABS program of population surveys using trained interviewers to collect information from selected samples of households. Survey responses are coded, edited and tabulated by the component before being passed to the relevant statistical components for analysis and dissemination of survey results.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduction of telephone interviewing into the monthly population survey which measures, among other things, Australia's employment and unemployment. Data quality was maintained and cost savings achieved.
- Publication of *Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups* (ABS Cat. no. 1266.0) and *Australian Standard Classification of Languages* (ABS Cat. no. 1267.0).
- Completion of a review of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification.
- Processing of data from the 1996 women's safety survey and the 1995 national health and nutrition surveys.

- Conduct of a survey of education and training.
- Conduct of the second annual reinterview of the panel of job seekers and other people recruited to the longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns.
- Completion of the development of a survey of mental health and wellbeing, and conduct of the first half of the survey.
- Initial development of a survey of disability, ageing and carers to be conducted in early 1998, and of a household expenditure survey to be conducted in 1998-99.
- Conduct of the quarterly population survey monitor, which collects data on a diverse range of topics (see Appendix 11 for the topics surveyed in 1996-97).

#### Econometric and Time Series Analysis

##### *Analytical Services*

The analytical services sub-component develops and applies analysis techniques to enhance understanding of social and economic statistics. It provides methodological advice to both the ABS and external users on the application of econometric and other methods, and on the availability and suitability of data for analysis. In addition, it publishes *Working Papers in Econometrics and Applied Statistics* (ABS Cat. no. 1351.0), the *TRYM Macroeconometric Model* (ABS Cat. nos. 1364.0.15.001-002) and an associated modellers' database (in ABS Cat. no. 1364.0.15.003).

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Construction of measures of inputs, outputs and productivity for government health services.
- Development of techniques for analysing the performance of price indexes at low levels of aggregation.
- Construction of a time series database to support the modelling of household demand.
- Analysis of the predictive power of ABS economic series, including job vacancies and business expectations.
- Analysis of results from the growth and performance survey to understand the contribution of small businesses to job generation and destruction.

### Time Series Analysis

The time series analysis sub-component maintains and develops facilities for the analysis of social and economic time series, especially for the estimation of seasonality, trading-day, trend and irregular factors. It assists both the ABS and external clients with the analysis, interpretation, modelling and forecasting of time series data.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of the fourth version of a knowledge-based time series analysis package (SEASABS).
- Continued training of government and private sector clients in the interpretation of time series data.

### Australian Economic Indicators

This sub-component publishes *Australian Economic Indicators* (ABS Cat. no. 1350.0), a monthly compendium of economic statistics, and is also responsible for the compilation and analysis of the experimental Composite Leading Indicator.

Activities and achievements during the year included completion of a detailed review of the components which contribute to the experimental Composite Leading Indicator. The results were published in a feature article in the July 1997 *Australian Economic Indicators*.

### Mathematical Statistics

#### Statistical Support

The statistical support sub-component undertakes sample design for ABS surveys to ensure that reliable statistics are provided efficiently and with minimum load on data providers. New surveys are designed and continuing surveys revised as necessary. In addition, statistical analysis and methodological investigations are undertaken to evaluate alternative collection strategies and estimation techniques to improve efficiency and data quality. Statistical analyses are also undertaken to assist understanding of ABS data.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Redesign of the sample for the monthly population survey, and the measurement of the statistical effect of using telephone interviewing and computer aided interviewing methodologies on labour force estimates.
- Development of methods for producing estimates from complex household surveys, such as the surveys of employment and unemployment patterns, health, nutrition, and literacy; and the post-enumeration survey for the 1996 Census of Population and Housing.

- Continued development of methodology for analysis of ABS data, such as standardisation tools for survey estimates, and time series models for small area estimation.
- Review of the selection and estimation methods of surveys providing information for the compilation of input output tables.
- Continued statistical analysis of data from the Australian Taxation Office for incorporation in the input output tables, thereby reducing the needs for direct collection of statistical data from businesses.
- Review of several aspects of the methodology used in the survey of stocks and sales.
- Further investigation and introduction of significance editing to reduce the load imposed by editing on respondents and on the ABS.
- Various sample redesigns and related investigations to reduce provider load.
- Implementation of estimation methods which improve the coverage of businesses included in economic statistics.

#### *Statistical Consultancy and Training*

The statistical consultancy and training sub-component helps ABS and external users to meet their information needs through the provision of sample design, survey questionnaire and form design, data analysis and statistical training services.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Development, for the Bureau of Tourism Research, of the methodology component of the tender documentation for a national visitors survey.
- A statistical analysis of data from the survey of employment and unemployment patterns for the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- An outposting to Purchasing Australia to investigate and report on the availability and quality of statistics of purchasing in Commonwealth agencies.
- Implementation, training and ongoing support for upgrades to the standard forms design tool used within the ABS.
- Commenced development of a program of improvements to ABS form development and evaluation methods, focused on improving data quality, and reducing the load on businesses providing data.



*Statistical Services and User Liaison*

The statistical services and user liaison (SSUL) component provides a flexible and responsive service to meet priority statistical needs of State and Territory governments which are additional to those met by ongoing statistical activities of the ABS. The work is undertaken by ABS Regional Offices and generally takes the form of statistical consultation (such as design, development and conduct of a survey), statistical analysis, modelling of existing ABS or client data, and the presentation of seminars for a broad range of clients in the public and private sectors and in tertiary institutions. ABS officers are also outposted to State or Territory government agencies to carry out specific short-term statistical assignments.

Through the SSUL component, the ABS participates in bodies established by State or Territory governments to co-ordinate their statistical activities and requirements. The SSUL component also maintains bilateral contact with State and Territory government departments and agencies in order to be aware of their needs for statistics, their statistical activities and their use of information from existing collections, and to encourage the adoption of uniform statistical standards and practices.

An important role of SSUL staff is to be closely involved in the development and conduct of annual State-specific ABS household surveys, the topics of which vary from State to State. In some offices the component also undertakes special analyses of ABS data and produces publications, typically using data from ABS household-based surveys, presenting results for sub-State regions.

Activities and achievements during the year included the following, which are illustrative of a wider range of activities:

- Design and selection of a sample for a continuous household travel survey to be conducted by the NSW Department of Transport.
- Provision of an outposted officer to the NSW Department of Transport to undertake analysis of data from their 1992 household travel survey.
- Conduct and processing of an April 1997 crime and safety survey for the NSW Police Service and the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.
- Conduct of a survey of leisure participation by Victorians for the Victorian Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Natural Resources and Environment, and State Development.
- Assistance to the Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE (on behalf of the Office of Training and Further Education) with a study of training and development activities in Victorian TAFE institutes.
- Provision of a multivariate analysis of graduate destination survey data to the Office of Training and Further Education in Victoria.

- Provision of a senior level outposting at the Industry Commission in Melbourne to identify areas in which the ABS can be of assistance to the Commission in its work, with particular emphasis on the review of Government service provision.
- Conduct of a survey on safety in the home for the Queensland Department of Health.
- Assistance to the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority in the development and conduct of a survey of recreational fishing by Queensland residents.
- Provision of outposted officers to the WA State Treasury to assess data requirements and develop a collection methodology for measuring the cost of social concessions to the State, and to the WA Department of Productivity and Labour Relations to assess requirements for data relating to enterprise agreements.
- Processing and publication of Lower Courts statistics for 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 on behalf of the WA Ministry of Justice.
- Assistance to the WA Police Service, the Health Department of WA, and the Equal Opportunity Commission with the development and conduct of various surveys.
- Review of a survey proposal by the National Injury Surveillance Unit (SA) to measure the incidence, cause and impact of accidents suffered by Australians.
- Conduct of a quality review of the statistics from SA Courts Administration databases.
- Conduct of a food safety survey for the Tasmanian Department of Community and Health Services.
- Provision of an outposted officer to the Tasmanian Department of Transport to investigate existing sources of data, to coordinate existing collection activities within the Department, and to assist in development of a survey of heavy load road users.
- Provision of an outposted officer to the NT Department of Housing and Local Government to assist the development of a statistical information warehouse of housing and local government data and in developing a housing needs model.
- Development of a directory of NT Government research projects and statistical data holdings.
- Conduct of a survey of shopping preferences for the ACT Government.
- Completion of a detailed re-analysis of the 1993-94 retail census and monthly retail survey data for the ACT Government for

purposes of monitoring the impact of changes in retail trading hours.

## Data Management

The data management component aims to improve client service through better catalogued, more visible and more accessible output data, integrate concepts and procedures to enhance the information content and mutual compatibility of separate data products, and reduce systems maintenance costs. These goals are being approached through the development, loading and use of a corporate information 'warehouse' from which most, if not all, ABS data products will ultimately be generated. The warehouse (also known as the ABSDB) has facilities to store, catalogue, and access all the output data produced by the ABS together with the 'metadata' describing the underlying concepts and procedures. Its development parallels data warehousing initiatives being undertaken by other organisations but has special features in support of ABS requirements such as the linking of data with metadata and the ability to generate statistical reports in a variety of formats and media.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Decommissioning of existing information retrieval and dissemination systems in favour of warehouse facilities.
- Development and implementation of advanced metadata management systems to ensure that more rigorous and effective statistical procedures are adopted across the ABS.
- Substantial progress with data and metadata loading (ABS dissemination activity is progressively moving to using warehouse facilities).

## Information Technology Bureau

The Information Technology (IT) Bureau component is responsible for the installation and operation of the ABS central computing equipment, mid-range equipment and communication networks for voice and data, installation and support of small-scale technology (including personal computers), development and support of systems software and program products, support of databases, and management of ABS electronic storage media.

The IT Bureau charges its internal clients for the services it provides and funds its operations from these charges.

Most ABS statistical processing is carried out on the Bureau's Fujitsu GS8400/30 mainframe, which runs ADABAS databases. In addition, the ABS has 20 Sun Microsystems UNIX servers and workstations. These computers run the Oracle database management systems and support finance, personnel, library, management information, and a growing number of statistical systems.

Access to the mainframe and 16 of the UNIX machines is through the ABS network, consisting of about 3,000 personal computers (PCs)

using the Banyan Vines network operating system. The PCs run Microsoft Windows. There is an increasing trend towards distributed processing for both statistical and administrative processing.

Three UNIX machines are used to provide services to clients outside the ABS, with another UNIX server providing a dedicated test environment for the applications running on the three servers. These machines are not connected to the ABS Network.

All ABS staff have access to Lotus NOTES, which provides work flow applications, document management and work group databases, as well as electronic mail and word processing capabilities.

Achievements and activities during the year included:

- Introduction of Windows 95 and NOTES 4.5.
- Rationalisation of desktop products including the decommissioning of over 300 products.
- Introduction of cost recovery for voice communications.
- Connection to the Tasmanian Government Tasinet service for voice communication in Hobart.
- Introduction of new hardware and software to backup data on Unix machines.
- Development of an Internet firewall with conditional accreditation from Defence Signals Directorate (the first firewall to achieve this status). This provides ABS staff with access to Internet mail and controlled access to the World Wide Web.
- Installation of a new Unix server to run Fujitsu's Object Oriented Database for the Business Register.
- Completion of the move to the latest version of Sun's Unix operating system.
- Installation of the Spectrum network management framework to provide better monitoring of network management and performance.

#### Technology Application

The technology application component is responsible for the provision of application development and support as required throughout the ABS, third-party software product support, consultancy and IT planning.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Commencement of work on ensuring Year 2000 compliance for ABS computer systems.

- Substantial enhancements to the ABS Information Warehouse software allowing the decommissioning of a number of legacy systems.
- Substantial completion of the first stage of the business register system using object oriented technology.
- Successful commissioning and operation of systems for processing of the 1996 Census of Population and Housing.
- Continued development and promulgation of formal procedures covering service definition, effort recording, and full cost recovery for all technology application services.
- Implementation of the ABS new time series software, FAME and the commencement of the conversion of existing legacy systems used by national accounts and balance of payments from INFOS to FAME.
- Production release of the knowledge-based seasonal analysis system allowing adjustment and trending of time series in the ABS Information Warehouse.
- Completion of a detailed business analysis, process reengineering and a first prototype for a national client services task management and tracking system to manage external client inquiries for ABS information, products and services.
- Redevelopment of the electronic dissemination service PC-Ausstats to improve service to clients and achieve better technical system operation by ABS staff.

#### Technology Research

The technology research component plays a lead role in identifying options for using information technology to improve ABS performance in achieving its statistical goals. The component is also responsible for security.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Work with the dissemination component to improve the publishing process and to enhance quality control in publishing and electronic dissemination.
- Work to establish an ABS Corporate Directory to provide ready access for both staff and IT systems to information on structures, persons, roles and responsibilities.
- Maintenance and enhancement of physical and IT security arrangements across ABS offices.



## 5 CORPORATE SERVICES SUB-PROGRAM

### OBJECTIVE

To assist managers to achieve ABS statistical goals through the provision of effective corporate management, and of efficient and equitable administration, planning and central support services.

### DESCRIPTION

The corporate services sub-program directly supports the ABS program by providing:

- Executive leadership.
- A corporate strategy for the planning and implementation of the ABS work program.
- Personnel services, including salaries payment, employee relations and conditions of service, recruitment, workplace relations, security, staff development and training.
- Financial management and accounting services including budgeting allocations and monitoring resource usage.
- General support services including accommodation, policy secretariat services and coordination of international relations.

The following table shows costs and average staffing of the sub-program.

**COST OF CORPORATE SERVICES SUB-PROGRAM AND AVERAGE STAFFING LEVEL**

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Total cost (\$'000)	32 101	34 208	32 693
Cost as a percentage of ABS expenditure (%)	14	13	10
Average operative staff years(a)	384	367	353

(a) More detailed information is available in Appendix 3, Table 3.1.

### OUTPUTS

The sub-program provides the organisational infrastructure, management and planning systems, staff and facilities necessary to undertake the day-to-day operations. It also provides longer term strategic planning for the ABS program including personnel policies designed to attract, develop and retain high quality staff. The sub-program is required to anticipate the demand for services and supplies, provide control mechanisms to monitor resources, and advise management on trends and developments in the availability and usage of resources. It also provides advice and assistance to managers in monitoring and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of specific areas of operation within the ABS.

The corporate services sub-program works in close contact with the central agencies (Public Service and Merit Protection Commission, Department of Industrial Relations, Department of Finance, Department of Administrative Services and Australian National Audit Office) in providing the necessary service support to the ABS program.

## REVIEW OF COMPONENTS

The remainder of this chapter reviews the activities and achievements of each component of the corporate services sub-program during 1996-97.

### Executive

For program management purposes, this component includes the Australian Statistician and the senior managers in each of the Regional Offices. SES officers in Central Office also provide executive leadership, but they are allocated to the support components which most closely reflect their responsibilities. However, issues affecting the SES as a whole are reported under the Executive component in the Annual Report.

The top structure and senior staff of the ABS are shown in Appendix 2, and the details of the composition of the SES are included in various tables in Appendix 3.

During the year, two persons (both from within the ABS) were promoted into the SES, one to a Regional Director position, the other as an Assistant Statistician in Central Office.

### Human Resource Management

The human resource management component is responsible for the operational aspects of personnel management (including the National Pay Centre), personnel security, and the development and implementation of personnel policies and practices (including policies and practices for Occupational Health and Safety, Industrial Democracy and Equal Employment Opportunity). It also has the responsibility for job design, job classification standards, workplace relations, and grievance and inefficiency issues. Broadly, the role of the human resource management component is to assist ABS managers and staff at all levels by providing a working environment (as distinct from a physical environment) which will maximise the opportunity for individuals and work groups to make their best contribution to meeting corporate objectives.

### Industrial consultation

The ABS is currently reviewing its consultative arrangements to bring them in line with the requirements of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*, which was introduced on 31 December 1996.

### Enterprise bargaining

Discussions commenced between ABS management and representatives of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) about a suitable ABS Certified Agreement and, as appropriate, Australian Workplace



Agreements, in accordance with the requirements of the *Workplace Relations Act*.

The Continuous Improvement Agreement developed by the ABS and the CPSU for Population Survey Interviewers was certified by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 12 September 1996.

#### *Recruitment*

The annual recruitment campaign for base level graduates (Graduate Administrative Assistants, Research Officers Grade 1, Statistical Cadets and Information Technology Officers, Grade 1) was conducted. A total of 127 applicants took up appointment offers during 1996-97: 58 for work in economic, population, social and labour statistics, 23 for work in mathematical statistical areas, and 42 in information technology. Four statistical cadets, who were recruited to complete an honours year in economics or statistics, complete the total. Of the 127 recruited, 42 were appointed to positions in Regional offices.

In addition to the annual intake of graduates, the ABS also recruited 220 staff from other APS agencies and outside the APS during the year, against the background of 272 separations (7% of average staff levels).

#### *Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)*

The ABS practises equality of opportunity in all employment matters and is committed to the principle of EEO through a formal EEO Program. Overall responsibility for EEO rests with the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division, supported by Regional Directors. Managers and supervisors in all offices have primary responsibility for achieving EEO objectives.

The Consultative Council in each office monitors and reviews EEO implementation, and reports as necessary to the National Consultative Council.

The ABS has a national network of Harassment Contact Officers and EEO Co-ordinators whose roles include handling inquiries and any informal EEO related complaints. Informal complaints relating to discrimination, sexual harassment and other workplace harassment are generally resolved through conciliation in the workplace. Staff may also lodge a formal grievance.

EEO training was included in all induction, supervisor and middle management development programs.

Major EEO activities and achievements during the year included:

- Appointing five Aboriginal Cadet Statisticians.
- Training and advertising a large network of Harassment Contact Officers.

- Promoting career development issues for women through women's forums and networks.
- Developing a mentoring program.
- Establishing a carers' room available to staff on a short term basis to assist them with their caring responsibilities.

Information on numbers and percentages of staff in the EEO groups is given in Appendix 3.

#### *Childcare*

The Blucbell Child Care Centre in Belconnen, ACT, of which the ABS is a major sponsor along with the Australian Taxation Office, was officially opened on 4 December 1996. ABS staff have used the majority of the 25 places allocated for them. By June 1997 the centre had reached two thirds capacity. The Centre is managed by a non profit agency, the Sydney Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools Association.

#### *Industrial Democracy*

The ABS continued to foster good participative management practices in line with its Corporate Plan. More details are given in Appendix 4.

#### *Occupational Health and Safety*

A report on activities to promote occupational health and safety is given in Appendix 5.

#### *Organisation and People Development*

The organisation and people development component is responsible for information technology (IT) training, leadership and management development, development and coordination of statistical training, competency-based training for Graduate Administrative Assistants (GAAs), Studybank and workplace consultancies. An extensive review of training and development was undertaken during the year leading to more corporately focussed training activities and ongoing staff savings.

Key activities during the year included:

- Restructure of the organisation and people development function and development of business focussed performance indicators to ensure cost effective deployment of resources.
- Introduction of the ABS Leadership Program, developed in partnership with the Australian Graduate School of Management, as a flagship program for potential leaders of the ABS.
- Review and re-development of middle management programs around a core set of management competencies reflecting current and future needs of the ABS.

- Introduction of the ABS Graduate Certificate in Management, a senior management program developed in partnership with, and primarily conducted by, the University of Canberra.
- Review of the statistical training strategy and the development or redevelopment of statistical training programs.
- Review of the competency-based training program for the 1997 intake of GAAs resulting in delivery of shorter, more intensive modules commencing with a core set provided in Central Office for GAAs from Central and Regional Offices.
- Delivery of an intensive program of IT training for all ABS staff in association with the ABS's conversion to Windows 95.

The following table shows the proportion of staff years involved in training and development activity, in terms of both participation in and provision of formal training activities.

**PROPORTION OF TOTAL STAFF YEARS SPENT ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES(a)**  
(%)

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Trainees	3.3	3.3	4.4
Trainers	1.4	1.3	1.3
Total	4.7	4.6	5.7

(a) Excludes on-the-job training.

## Financial Resources Management

### Financial Management

The financial management component provides service and advice in the processing of all ABS accounts, receipts and debts and maintains relevant manuals and instructions. It prepares the ABS financial statements and monitors and reports on financial resources. In conjunction with Corporate Planning, it negotiates with Department of Finance in the Budget process and prepares agency contributions to budget papers. It also provides technical, conceptual and strategic advice on accounting and financial management principles within the ABS. It develops and maintains corporate accounting policies on emerging issues and is responsible for developing and updating the principles, methods, systems and procedures for generating relevant costing information.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduced electronic forms and a direct credit facility for payment of all allowances to staff.
- Implemented electronic invoicing for travel expenses.
- Implemented a direct credit facility for payments to suppliers.

- Commenced electronic invoicing for cabcharge payments.
- Reviewed and redeveloped monthly financial reports on budgets and expenditure for Cost Centres.
- Commenced review of the ABS Chart of Accounts, with the object of simplifying it.
- Commenced update of the Statistician's Financial Instructions to align with the impending Financial Management and Accountability legislation.
- Commenced preparation for the Government's APS-wide financial reforms towards a full accrual accounting framework including accrual budgeting and more frequent accrual reporting. This included discussions with Statistics New Zealand, the New Zealand Treasury and review of the financial management work program.

#### *Corporate Services Systems*

This component provides and administers corporate systems associated with financial management and human resource management.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- A major upgrade of elements of the financial management information system used by ABS — Oracle Financials.
- The introduction of electronic systems associated with staff selection, allowances and claims, purchasing, vacancies, delegations, travel, separations, carer's leave, and the Electronic Gazette.
- Commencement of the development of an electronic Corporate Directory, to hold details of ABS organisational units, people and other resources, and their various interrelationships.

#### *Office Services*

The office services component has responsibility for the following functions: national accommodation principles, standards and policy, strategic planning for office accommodation requirements for Central Office, negotiation of leases for properties occupied by the ABS and the management of the allocation and usage of space within these properties, building and office maintenance, vehicle fleet management, domestic and overseas travel, and records management.

The main activities and achievements during the year included:

- Implementation of a new travel contract with Qantas Airways Pty Ltd.
- Relocation of over 550 staff to refurbished accommodation within Cameron Offices.

- Review of a range of building services contracts and the harvesting of related savings, eg for waste disposal, for the provision of indoor plants, and maintenance services for the 'Telelift System'.
- Implementation of waste recycling for paper, glass, plastic and aluminium.
- Implementation of a computer-based space management facility.
- Negotiation of new Commonwealth Tenants Leases for three properties leased by ABS: Cameron Offices, Canberra, the Commonwealth Centre, Adelaide and 25 Jones Street, Ultimo.
- Further investigation and implementation of energy management practices.

#### Secretariat

The secretariat component provides a range of services including ministerial and parliamentary liaison, support for high level internal and external meetings and conferences, and legislation services.

The legislation services include development of proposals for new and revised statistics legislation, provision of advice to ABS management and staff on statistics legislation (in particular, legislative provisions for the release of statistics), and administration within the ABS of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (see Appendix 6 for further information), the *Privacy Act 1988* and other administrative law. Secretariat coordinates all legal action in which the ABS becomes involved, including the small number of cases where legal action is considered necessary to obtain completed forms from persons and businesses included in ABS statistical collections.

The ABS makes every effort to obtain the willing cooperation of data providers and the Statistician rarely issues notices of direction (under the provisions of subsections 10(4) and 11(2) of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*) to persons to complete a form or answer a question. (Under subsection 14 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the ABS can initiate prosecution action against a person who fails to comply with a notice of direction.)

The number of notices of direction issued and the number of prosecution actions approved in recent years are shown in the following table.

# NOTICES OF DIRECTION ISSUED AND PROSECUTION ACTIONS APPROVED(a)

Type of statistical collection	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Notices of direction issued					
Population Census	..	..	..	..	946
Household surveys	..	6	..	..	1
Business censuses and surveys	15	15	10	9	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>967</b>
Prosecution actions approved(a)					
Population Census	..	..	..	..	48
Household surveys	..	..	..	..	..
Business censuses and surveys	4	3	6	..	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>51</b>

(a) Approved by the Australian Statistician for referral to the relevant office of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Australian Government Solicitor. Each prosecution action is counted under the year in which the corresponding notice of direction was issued. Not every prosecution action approved proceeds to court (for example, because of subsequent receipt of the required information, or lack of sufficient information to serve a summons).

The Statistics Determination made by the Minister under section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* enables the Statistician to disclose certain classes of information. Lists of names and addresses disclosed under clause 6 of the Statistics Determination, which are tabled in Parliament, are shown in Appendix 8. Disclosures of unidentifiable information under clause 7 of the Statistics Determination are shown in Appendix 9.

## International Relations

The ABS is an important member of the international statistical community. Great importance is placed on ensuring that Australia's statistics are internationally comparable through compliance with standards set by such bodies as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. As well, the ABS contributes constructively in a wide variety of international forums.

The international relations component plans, manages and coordinates ABS relations with international organisations and national statistical agencies. This is achieved through formulating policy and advising on policy issues, assisting other ABS areas to keep abreast of, and contribute to, international statistical developments, coordinating the supply of statistical data to international organisations, coordinating ABS assistance to other countries, and coordinating programs for overseas visitors to the ABS.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Australia's election, in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, to membership of the United Nations Statistical Commission for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 1998.
- Convening the first meeting of an international expert group on household income statistics.

- Convening an international conference on the measurement of capital stock.
- Providing technical assistance to statistical agencies in other countries, through visits by ABS staff and visits to Australia for study tours and training. Assistance was provided to Bangladesh, China, Fiji, Guam, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mauritius, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Vanuatu and Vietnam. Of particular note is the continuation of assistance to South Africa, started in 1995-96, which is being provided under AusAID's South African Public Sector Support Program and relates to the population census, economic statistics and social statistics.

#### **Corporate Planning**

The corporate planning sub-component has responsibility for the ABS budgetary planning system, coordinating the revision and implementation of the ABS Corporate Plan, coordinating the development of the ABS Forward Work Program, coordinating internal audits undertaken by external service providers, and coordinating and participating, wherever appropriate, in program evaluations. Apart from its ongoing work, the most significant achievement of the component during 1996-97 was the introduction of external service providers for the internal audit program.

#### **Internal Audit**

Audit activities for the ABS are contracted to Ernst & Young for compliance and efficiency audits, and to Stanton Partners for information technology auditing. An Internal Audit Committee manages and determines internal audit priorities. The main internal audit activities undertaken during 1996-97 included:

- The development of an ABS Fraud Risk Assessment Plan.
- Audits of the payments system, Australian Government Credit Card usage, national statistical units, cost assessment and recovery, mobile phone usage, accounts receivable and payments to agents.
- Assistance in the development of performance measurement and reporting.
- Commencement of a review of the population surveys financial framework.
- Audits of the control of software usage, systems development life cycles, maintenance of the information technology environment, data communications and networks, and the Oracle Financials upgrade.

#### **ANAO Audits**

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) issued the following reports in relation to financial statements:

- ANAO Audit Report No 19 1996-97 *Results of the 1995-96 Financial Statements Audits of Commonwealth Entities.*
- ANAO Audit Report No 24 1996-97 *Aggregate Financial Statement prepared by the Minister for Finance Year Ended 30 June 1996.*

The financial statements were satisfactory and an unqualified audit report was issued to the ABS.

The ANAO also issued Report No. 35 1996-97 *Performance Audit: 1996 Census of Population and Housing.* This report found the part of the 1996 Census cycle completed to March 1997 had been generally carried out efficiently and effectively by the ABS.





*Richard Nicholson, who was a member of the 1996 Paralympic Team, received an ABS Australia Day Award for sporting achievement from the Australian Statistician Bill McLennan.*



## APPENDIXES



# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

## Appendix 1

### ABS PROGRAM STRUCTURE, 1996-97

<i>Program</i>	<i>Sub-programs</i>	<i>Components</i>
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Statistical Operations	Client Services
		Library Services
		Dissemination
		Marketing and Public Relations
		National Accounts
		International Accounts
		International Trade
		Prices
		Financial Accounts
		Public Sector Accounts
		Agriculture
		Mining
		Manufacturing
		Construction
		Transport
		Tourism
		Service Industries
		Economy Wide Statistics
		Business Statistics
		Small Business
		Science and Technology
		Environment
		Classification
		Standards and Methods
		Business Register
		SPEED
		Geography
		Census
		Demography
		National Centres for Crime, Sport and Recreation, and Indigenous Statistics

...continued

**ABS PROGRAM STRUCTURE, 1996-97 — continued**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Sub-programs</u>	<u>Components</u>
	Statistical Operations — continued	Labour Social Statistics Population Surveys Econometric and Time Series Analyses Mathematical Statistics Statistical Services and User Liaison Data Management Data Management Coordination and Support Information Technology Bureau Technology Application Technology Research Economic Statistics Group Support Population Statistics Group Support Methodology Division Business Office Information Services Division Business Office Technology Services Division Support
	Corporate Services	Executive Human Resource Management Organisation and People Development Financial Resources Management Office Services Secretariat International Relations Unit Corporate Services Division Support

# TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT

## Appendix 2

### ABS TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES(a)

<i>Top structure and staff responsibilities</i>	<i>Program Component</i>
<b>AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN</b> <i>Bill McLennan</i>	Executive
<b>ECONOMIC STATISTICS GROUP</b> <i>Dennis Trewin</i>	Environment Statistics Economic Statistics Group Support
Economic Accounts Division <i>Rob Edwards</i>	Prices Public Sector Accounts
National Accounts Branch <i>Barbara Dunlop</i>	National Accounts
International and Financial Accounts Branch <i>Ivan King</i>	International Accounts International Trade Financial Accounts
Services and Small Business Statistics Branch <i>Russell Rogers</i>	Transport Tourism Service Industries Small Business Science and Technology SPEED
Production Statistics Branch <i>Alan Mackay</i>	Agriculture Mining Manufacturing Construction Economy Wide Statistics Business Statistics
Integration Branch <i>John Struik</i>	Classification Standards and Methods Business Register
<b>POPULATION STATISTICS GROUP</b> <i>Tim Skinner</i>	Population Statistics Group Support
Social and Labour Division <i>George Sarossy</i>	National Centres for Crime, Sport and Recreation and Indigenous Statistics
Labour Statistics Branch <i>Robin Green</i>	Labour
Social Statistics Branch <i>Marion McEwin</i>	Social Statistics Social Analysis, Income and Welfare

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

**ABS TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES(a) —**  
*continued*

<i>Top structure and staff responsibilities</i>	<i>Program Component</i>
<b>POPULATION STATISTICS GROUP — continued</b>	
Population Surveys and Data Standards Branch	
Glenn Cocking	Population Surveys
Census and Geography Branch	
Siu-Ming Tam	Geography
	Census
	Demography
<b>OTHER DIVISIONS</b>	
Methodology Division	
Susan Linacre	
Statistical Services Branch	
Geoff Lee	Econometric and Time Series Analysis
	Mathematical Statistics
Information Services Division	
John Cornish	Information Services and Methodology Business Office
	Library
Dissemination Services Branch	
Denis Farrell	Dissemination
Client Services Branch	
Dick Crockett	Client Services
	Marketing and Public Relations
Technology Services Division	
Brian Pink	Technology Services Division Support
Technology Support Branch	
Paul Pentony	Information Technology Bureau
Technology Application Branch	
Dave Bennison	Technology Application
Technology Research	
Bryan Fitzpatrick	Technology Research
Data Management Branch	
Warren Richter	Data Management
Corporate Services Division	
Graham Wauchop	Corporate Services Division Support
Policy Secretariat Branch	
Peter Harper	Secretariat
	International Relations Unit
Human Resources Branch	
John Dent	Human Resource Management
	Organisation and People Development
Financial Resources Branch	
Stevan Matheson	Financial Resources Management
	Office Services

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued



**ABS TOP STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PROGRAM COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES(a) —**  
*continued*

<i>Top structure and staff responsibilities</i>	<i>Program Component</i>
<b>REGIONAL OFFICES</b>	
New South Wales <i>Greg Bray</i>	
Victoria <i>Stuart Jackson</i>	
Queensland <i>Brian Doyle</i>	
Western Australia <i>Peter Kelly</i>	
South Australia <i>Peter Gardner</i>	
Tasmania <i>Denis Rogers</i>	
Northern Territory <i>Zia Abbasi</i>	
Australian Capital Territory <i>Dalma Jacobs</i>	

(a) Structure as at 30 June 1997. The names of officers managing Groups, Divisions, Branches or Offices include those who were doing so on a long term basis, but exclude those who were doing so on a short-term basis on 30 June 1997.



# STAFFING OVERVIEW

## Appendix 3

### 3.1 ABS STAFF RESOURCES EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND LOCATIONS (staff years(a))

	1994-95 1995-96		1996-97										
Program component	Total	Total	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
STATISTICAL OPERATIONS(b)													
Client Services	125	117	30	28	17	13	11	11	5	2	5	—	124
Library Services	31	30	16	3	3	3	1	1	1	—	—	—	28
Dissemination	82	80	39	4	28	5	2	3	2	1	—	—	84
Marketing and Public Relations	60	49	26	5	9	7	2	1	—	1	—	—	51
National Accounts	55	57	57	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	57
International Accounts	72	68	79	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	79
International Trade	41	39	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	34
Prices	107	101	64	24	8	4	4	4	3	2	—	—	112
Financial Accounts	27	27	18	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27
Public Sector Accounts	71	62	29	9	7	7	4	5	5	2	—	—	67
Agriculture	100	59	14	—	—	1	1	1	49	—	—	—	66
Mining	11	11	—	—	—	—	—	9	—	2	—	—	11
Manufacturing	79	80	3	72	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	77
Construction	65	63	9	—	—	—	—	52	—	—	—	—	62
Transport	37	55	8	—	—	32	1	—	—	—	—	—	41
Tourism	21	23	1	—	—	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	20
Service Industries	91	95	39	1	51	6	—	1	—	—	—	—	98
Economy Wide Statistics	18	31	41	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41
Business Statistics(c)	56	40	9	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	49
Small Business	6	13	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Science and Technology	14	13	10	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Environment	8	12	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13
Classification	9	9	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11
Standards and Methods(c)	38	38	21	12	12	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	50
Business Register	110	114	16	7	53	3	1	—	11	—	—	—	91
SPEED	6	6	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Geography	11	14	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13
Census	87	132	55	6	8	5	4	5	5	4	1	728	821
Demography	56	46	21	4	1	12	3	4	1	2	—	—	48
National Centres for Crime, Sport & Recr., and Indig. Stats.(c)	77	64	—	3	14	—	2	11	—	17	—	—	48
Labour	160	176	92	—	6	1	107	—	—	—	—	—	206
Social Statistics(c)	64	87	83	2	—	17	2	—	—	—	—	—	105
Population Surveys	266	283	119	33	27	31	21	26	10	7	—	—	273

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

**3.1 ABS STAFF RESOURCES EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND LOCATIONS (staff years(a)) — continued**

	1994-95 1995-96		1996-97										
Program component	Total	Total	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
STATISTICAL OPERATIONS(b) — (continued)													
Econometric & Time Series Analyses	19	21	24	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	24
Mathematical Statistics	65	64	53	5	4	2	3	3	1	—	—	—	70
Statistical Services and User Liaison	66	60	—	8	11	6	8	7	11	3	3	—	57
Data Management	15	27	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	19
Data Management Coordination and Support(c)	—	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
Information Technology Bureau	189	194	151	11	10	9	8	7	7	2	—	—	205
Technology Application	204	187	125	13	7	11	13	10	16	—	—	—	194
Technology Research	22	8	11	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Economic Statistics Group Support	50	47	15	5	11	3	4	6	3	2	—	—	48
Population Statistics Group Support	49	52	20	5	6	10	5	5	2	2	—	—	53
Methodology Division Business Office	—	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Information Services Division Business Office	12	13	9	—	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	12
Technology Services Division Support	7	6	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
Total(d)	2 759	2 774	1 432	309	293	211	209	174	132	49	9	728	3 546
CORPORATE SERVICES(b)													
Executive	45	45	1	8	7	6	5	5	6	5	2	—	46
Human Resource Management	97	93	61	14	5	6	3	3	2	1	—	—	95
Organisation and People Development	68	65	25	7	7	7	7	3	2	—	—	—	58
Financial Resources Management	42	47	27	3	12	1	—	4	—	1	—	—	48
Office Services	97	80	33	9	5	6	8	4	4	2	—	—	72
Secretariat	10	15	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15
International Relations Unit	5	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Internal Audit	5	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Corporate Services Division Support	15	12	10	—	—	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	15
Total	384	367	176	40	37	27	25	22	14	9	2	—	353
Total Operative Staff(d)	3 143	3 141	1 608	350	330	238	234	196	146	58	11	728	3 899
Paid Inoperative Staff (e)	94	84	35	14	9	5	7	4	3	1	—	1	78
Total Staff(d)	3 237	3 225	1 643	364	339	244	241	199	150	59	11	729	3 978

(a) Comprises full-time staff and part-time staff at their full time equivalent. Excludes unpaid inoperative staff. (b) Excluding paid inoperative staff. (c) Figures for 1994-95 and 1995-96 have not been adjusted to reflect changes to the program structure for 1996-97. (d) Revised for 1994-95 and 1995-96. (e) Includes staff on periods of leave for longer than twelve weeks, for example, staff on long service leave, extended sick leave etc.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

### 3.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY LOCATION, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1997(a)

Year and classification	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
MALE											
<b>1995</b>											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1995	911	195	172	126	131	108	96	25	4	12	1 780
<b>1996</b>											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1996	926	200	183	132	141	116	97	33	5	29	1 862
<b>1997</b>											
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)											
Australian Statistician	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Senior Executive Service	24	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	31
Senior Officer											
Grade A	21	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	25
Grade B	42	4	5	4	4	4	2	1	0	0	66
Grade C	121	19	16	10	12	9	3	1	1	3	195
Administrative Service Officer											
Class 6 (c)	190	26	27	15	9	13	13	5	1	13	312
Class 5 (c)	111	37	45	26	24	24	19	3	0	12	301
Class 4 (c)	77	41	35	20	20	26	17	6	3	3	248
Class 3 (c)	42	38	25	18	16	20	10	1	0	58	228
Class 2 (c)	52	14	5	11	10	8	14	1	0	5	120
Class 1	5	3	4	3	8	0	0	0	0	360	383
Senior Information Technology Officer											
Grade A	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Grade B	23	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	28
Grade C	51	2	2	2	1	2	3	0	0	2	65
Information Technology Officer											
Class 2	70	7	4	5	10	5	11	0	0	1	113
Class 1	42	4	2	3	6	5	3	0	0	0	65
Senior Professional Officer	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Professional Officer	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other classifications	6	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	12
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	892	198	174	121	123	117	98	21	5	459	2 208
Unpaid inoperative staff	28	3	4	2	2	4	1	0	0	1	45
<b>Total male staff at 30 June 1997</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>2 253</b>

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

**3.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY LOCATION, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1997(a) — continued**

Year and classification	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
	FEMALE										
<b>1995</b>											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1995	728	159	144	121	117	79	64	30	5	6	1 453
<b>1996</b>											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1996	801	175	166	131	135	91	66	40	8	14	1 627
<b>1997</b>											
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)											
Australian Statistician	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Executive Service	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Senior Officer											
Grade A	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Grade B	16	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
Grade C	90	3	9	2	4	3	0	3	0	0	114
Administrative Service Officer											
Class 6 (c)	145	8	25	6	10	3	1	2	0	6	206
Class 5 (c)	148	24	37	13	19	11	5	9	2	16	284
Class 4 (c)	119	32	37	18	30	26	6	7	5	3	283
Class 3 (c)	85	53	25	34	19	23	14	6	1	29	289
Class 2 (c)	77	22	11	29	17	13	20	0	0	2	191
Class 1	10	3	6	1	8	5	4	0	0	222	259
Senior Information Technology Officer											
Grade A	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Grade B	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Grade C	17	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	23
Information Technology Officer											
Class 2	26	1	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	34
Class 1	6	2	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	13
Senior Professional Officer	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Professional Officer	4	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	10
Other classifications	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	761	154	153	111	109	87	55	28	9	280	1 747
Unpaid inoperative staff	44	11	5	7	5	6	4	1	0	1	84
<b>Total female staff at 30 June 1997</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>1 831</b>

For footnotes see end of table.

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### 3.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY LOCATION, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1997(a) — continued

Year and classification	CO	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT	DPC	Total
	TOTAL										
<b>1995</b>											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1995	1639	354	316	247	248	187	160	55	9	18	3 233
<b>1996</b>											
Total Staff at 30 June, 1996	1727	375	349	263	276	207	163	73	13	43	3 489
<b>1997</b>											
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)											
Australian Statistician	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Senior Executive Service	27	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	34
Senior Officer											
Grade A	23	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	28
Grade B	58	6	6	4	4	4	2	1	0	0	85
Grade C	211	22	25	12	16	12	3	4	1	3	309
Administrative Service Officer											
Class 6 (c)	335	34	52	21	19	16	14	7	1	19	518
Class 5 (c)	259	61	82	39	43	35	24	12	2	28	585
Class 4 (c)	196	73	72	38	50	52	23	13	8	6	531
Class 3 (c)	127	91	50	52	35	43	24	7	1	87	517
Class 2 (c)	129	36	16	40	27	21	34	1	0	7	311
Class 1	15	6	10	4	16	5	4	0	0	582	642
Senior Information Technology Officer											
Grade A	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Grade B	27	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	32
Grade C	68	4	2	2	2	2	5	0	0	3	88
Information Technology Officer											
Class 2	96	8	5	8	10	6	12	0	0	2	147
Class 1	48	6	2	5	7	6	4	0	0	0	78
Senior Professional Officer	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Professional Officer	5	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	12
Other classifications	11	1	1	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	19
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	1 653	352	327	232	232	204	153	49	14	739	3 955
Unpaid inoperative staff	72	14	9	9	7	10	5	1	0	2	129
<b>Total staff at 30 June 1997</b>	<b>1 725</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>4 084</b>

(a) Includes also the Australian Statistician, who is a statutory office holder appointed under the Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975. Excludes casual staff employed for short periods for population surveys. (b) Inoperative staff are shown against the classification that they were paid at on 30 June 1997. (c) Includes Research Officer classifications with same maximum salaries.

**3.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1997(a)**

Year and classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES</b>									
<b>1995</b>									
Total staff at 30 June	1 698	1 203	2 901	56	93	149	1 754	1 296	3 050
<b>1996</b>									
Total staff at 30 June	1 748	1 293	3 041	88	155	243	1 836	1 448	3 284
<b>1997</b>									
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)									
Australian Statistician	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Senior Executive Service	31	3	34	0	0	0	31	3	34
Senior Officer									
Grade A	25	3	28	0	0	0	25	3	28
Grade B	65	19	84	0	0	0	65	19	84
Grade C	193	103	296	0	2	2	193	105	298
Administrative Service Officer									
Class 6(c)	304	189	493	0	0	0	304	189	493
Class 5(c)	291	260	551	4	1	5	295	261	556
Class 4(c)	243	253	496	3	2	5	246	255	501
Class 3(c)	161	228	389	62	31	93	223	259	482
Class 2(c)	92	125	217	24	40	64	116	165	281
Class 1	10	18	28	372	237	609	382	255	637
Senior Information Technology Officer									
Grade A	12	2	14	0	0	0	12	2	14
Grade B	28	2	30	0	0	0	28	2	30
Grade C	64	17	81	0	0	0	64	17	81
Information Technology Officer									
Class 2	109	26	135	0	0	0	109	26	135
Class 1	63	13	76	1	0	1	64	13	77
Senior Professional Officer	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	2	3
Professional Officer	2	5	7	0	1	1	2	6	8
Other classifications	12	6	18	0	1	1	12	7	19
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	1 707	1 273	2 980	466	316	782	2 173	1 589	3 762
Unpaid inoperative staff	44	62	106	1	0	1	45	62	107
<b>Total full-time staff at 30 June 1997</b>	<b>1 751</b>	<b>1 335</b>	<b>3 086</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>2 218</b>	<b>1 651</b>	<b>3 869</b>

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued



**3.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922: BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1997(a) — continued**

Year and classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>PART-TIME EMPLOYEES</b>									
<b>1995</b>									
Total staff at 30 June	24	152	176	2	5	7	26	157	183
<b>1996</b>									
Total staff at 30 June	25	168	193	1	11	12	26	179	205
<b>1997</b>									
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)									
Australian Statistician	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Executive Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Officer									
Grade A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade B	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Grade C	2	9	11	0	0	0	2	9	11
Administrative Service Officer									
Class 6(c)	8	17	25	0	0	0	8	17	25
Class 5(c)	6	23	29	0	0	0	6	23	29
Class 4(c)	2	28	30	0	0	0	2	28	30
Class 3(c)	5	30	35	0	0	0	5	30	35
Class 2(c)	3	22	25	1	4	5	4	26	30
Class 1	0	2	2	1	2	3	1	4	5
Senior Information Technology Officer									
Grade A	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Grade B	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Grade C	1	6	7	0	0	0	1	6	7
Information Technology Officer									
Class 2	4	8	12	0	0	0	4	8	12
Class 1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Senior Professional Officer	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	4
Other classifications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	33	152	185	2	6	8	35	158	193
Unpaid inoperative staff	0	22	22	0	0	0	0	22	22
<b>Total part-time staff at 30 June 1997</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>215</b>

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

**3.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1992: BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1997(a) — continued**

Year and classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>TOTAL</b>									
<b>1995</b>									
Total staff at 30 June	1 722	1 355	3 077	58	98	156	1 780	1 453	3 233
<b>1996</b>									
Total staff at 30 June	1 773	1 461	3 234	89	166	255	1 862	1 627	3 489
<b>1997</b>									
Operative and paid inoperative staff(b)									
Australian Statistician	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Senior Executive Service	31	3	34	0	0	0	31	3	34
Senior Officer									
Grade A	25	3	28	0	0	0	25	3	28
Grade B	66	19	85	0	0	0	66	19	85
Grade C	195	112	307	0	2	2	195	114	309
Administrative Service Officer									
Class 6(c)	312	206	518	0	0	0	312	206	518
Class 5(c)	297	283	580	4	1	5	301	284	585
Class 4(c)	245	281	526	3	2	5	248	283	531
Class 3(c)	166	258	424	62	31	93	228	289	517
Class 2(c)	95	147	242	25	44	69	120	191	311
Class 1	10	20	30	373	239	612	383	259	642
Senior Information Technology Officer									
Grade A	12	3	15	0	0	0	12	3	15
Grade B	28	4	32	0	0	0	28	4	32
Grade C	65	23	88	0	0	0	65	23	88
Information Technology Officer									
Class 2	113	34	147	0	0	0	113	34	147
Class 1	64	13	77	1	0	1	65	13	78
Senior Professional Officer	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	2	3
Professional Officer	2	9	11	0	1	1	2	10	12
Other classifications	12	6	18	0	1	1	12	7	19
Total operative and paid inoperative staff	1 740	1 425	3 165	468	322	790	2 208	1 747	3 955
Unpaid inoperative staff	44	84	128	1	0	1	45	84	129
<b>Total staff at 30 June 1997</b>	<b>1 784</b>	<b>1 509</b>	<b>3 293</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>2 253</b>	<b>1 831</b>	<b>4 084</b>

(a) Includes, also, the Australian Statistician, who is a statutory office holder appointed under the Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975. Excludes casual staff employed for short periods for population surveys. (b) Inoperative staff are shown against the classification that they were paid at on 30 June 1997. (c) Includes Research Officer classifications with same maximum salaries.

**3.4 REPRESENTATION OF EEO GROUPS: PERMANENT ABS STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1997**

Salary range	Number of staff and percentage of total staff					
	Total Staff	Women	NESB1	NESB2	ATSI	PWD
\$26,457 and below (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 1)	47	28	6	7	9	7
%	—	59.6	12.8	14.9	19.1	14.9
\$27,091 to \$30,042 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 2)	256	157	30	21	2	24
%	—	61.3	11.7	8.2	0.8	9.4
\$30,857 to \$33,304 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 3)	446	273	53	38	5	22
%	—	61.2	11.9	8.5	1.1	4.9
\$34,391 to \$37,341 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 4)	632	317	72	66	1	36
%	—	50.2	11.4	10.4	0.2	5.7
\$38,359 to \$40,675 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 5)	597	295	60	46	2	23
%	—	49.4	10.1	7.7	0.3	3.9
\$41,430 to \$47,591 (Number includes Administrative Services Officer Grade 6)	696	260	51	51	2	32
%	—	37.4	7.3	7.3	0.3	4.6
\$50,931 to \$55,170 (Number includes Senior Officer Grade C)	414	146	30	20	2	13
%	—	35.3	7.2	4.8	0.5	3.1
\$57,983 to \$66,175 (Number includes Senior Officer Grade B)	120	24	10	6	0	7
%	—	20.0	8.3	5.0	0.0	5.8
\$68,497 only (Number includes Senior Officer Grade A)	45	6	2	1	0	2
%	—	13.3	4.4	2.2	0.0	4.4
\$75,501 and above (Number includes Senior Executive Service)	40	3	2	0	0	3
%	—	7.5	5.0	0.0	0.0	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 293</b>	<b>1 509</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>169</b>
% of total staff	—	45.8	9.6	7.8	0.7	5.1

EEO groups are not mutually exclusive and any individual officer may be included in more than one group. Percentages are based on total staff. Salary groupings are based on maximum salary for a classification. Inoperative staff are included. EEO coverage is staff who have elected to provide EEO information.

**Key:**

- NESB1 — People with non-English speaking background, first generation.  
 NESB2 — People with non-English speaking background, second generation.  
 ATSI — Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.  
 PWD — People with disabilities.

### 3.5 STAFF ENGAGED UNDER THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ACT 1905, 1996-97 (staff years)

Purpose	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Interviewer enumerated statistical collections (mainly household surveys)	287	293	290
Census of Population and Housing (including preparations for Census)	2	25	1 232
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>1 522</b>

### 3.6 CONSULTANTS ENGAGED BY ABS, 1996-97

Year	Number of consultants engaged(a)	Expenditure \$'000
1995-96	102	2 635
1996-97	133	3 153

(a) The number of consultancy projects undertaken during the financial year. Some consultants have undertaken more than one consultancy.

### 3.7 ABS INTAKE AND SEPARATIONS OF PERMANENT STAFF 1996-97(a) (number)

Method of intake and type of separation	SES	Non SES	Total
<b>Intake</b>			
Appointment — Graduate (b)	0	127	127
Appointment — Non-graduate (b)	0	83	83
Promotion or transfer from outside the ABS	0	137	137
<b>Total Intake</b>	0	347	347
<b>Separations</b>			
Promotion or transfer to outside the ABS	0	45	45
Resignation	0	135	135
Death	0	2	2
Dismissal	0	1	1
Retirement — Invalidity	0	3	3
Retirement — Under 76W, Public Service Act 1922	1	68	69
Retirement — Maximum Age	0	5	5
Retirement — Election by Officer — Age 55-59 years	0	5	5
Retirement — Election by Officer — Age 60-64 years	0	7	7
<b>Total Separations</b>	1	271	272

(a) Excludes temporary inward and outward transfers. (b) Includes appointment of staff following temporary employment.

**3.8 ABS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE STAFF BY SALARY LEVEL, GENDER AND LOCATION AT  
30 JUNE 1997**  
(number)

Year and location	Salary Band			Total	
	1	2	3	Male	Female
1995 Total	26	6	1	30	3
1996 Total	28	6	2	33	3
1997					
Australian Capital Territory	19	6	2	24	3
New South Wales	1	—	—	1	—
Victoria	1	—	—	1	—
Queensland	1	—	—	1	—
Western Australia	1	—	—	1	—
South Australia	1	—	—	1	—
Tasmania	1	—	—	1	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>3</b>

**3.9 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND PAY — NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE SES OFFICERS BY  
PERCENTAGE OF MAXIMUM PERMISSABLE PERFORMANCE PAY RECEIVED**

Range	Number of SES officers
0-20%	32
20-60%	1
60-80%	4
80-100%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Total performance pay</b>	<b>\$56 174</b>



Objective 4 of the ABS Corporate Plan is: "*A team of people with the skills and motivation to achieve the ABS mission*". The ABS strategy to achieve this objective includes the fostering of good participative management practices.

It is ABS policy to ensure that conditions and opportunities exist for the involvement of staff in the management of ABS activities.

Overall responsibility for Industrial Democracy (ID) lies with the Australian Statistician. The First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division, is the Senior Executive responsible for ID. The Regional Directors are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of ID in their offices.

Responsibility for national coordination, implementation and monitoring of ID activities is vested in a Senior Officer Grade C located in Central Office. All ABS offices have at least one officer whose duties include local implementation and coordination of ID.

The local consultative council in each ABS office oversees the implementation of ID in the ABS and reports to the National Consultative Council on progress towards meeting ID objectives.

The ABS has a mandatory selection criterion which requires all candidates for positions involving staff management to demonstrate ... that they have an understanding of, and a commitment to the principles and practices of ID, and the ability to apply them in the workplace.

The continued introduction of new information technologies throughout the ABS has contributed significantly to staff access to corporate information.

The ABS ID Plan is currently being revised in accordance with the provisions of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*.





## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

## Appendix 5

The Australian Bureau of Statistics is committed to the health, safety and welfare of its staff. A dedicated unit in Central Office, complemented by individual officers in Regional Offices, ensures that the requirements of the relevant legislation are observed.

A network of Occupational Health and Safety Committees is the vehicle for consultation on issues and policies affecting all staff.

During 1996-97, 21 staff were selected and trained as Health and Safety Representatives under the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991*.

There were no notifications under Sections 30, 45, 46 and 47 of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991*. 51 notifications were made under Section 68 of this Act.

### Accidents

The number of reported accidents and incidents for 1996-97 was 441, a reduction from the 484 reports made during 1995-96. The reported accidents fall into the following broad categories:

#### REPORTED ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS 1996-97

Accidents	1995-96	1996-97
Motor vehicle/journey related accidents	105	78
Accidents as a result of sporting injuries	28	21
Other work based incidents and accidents	351	342
<b>Total</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>441</b>

In 1996-97 there were 182 accidents that caused lost time, resulting in 1,080 lost days. The comparable figures for 1995-96 were 267 accidents and 1,835 lost days.

### Compensation claims

During 1996-97, 182 compensation claims were submitted, compared with 246 in 1995-96. 69 required implementation of a Return to Work plan (77 in 1995-96). 62 of these were closed during the year (61 in 1995-96).

Under the fitness for duty guidelines, 51 staff members required case management, with 25 cases closed during the year. In 1995-96 there were 57 cases of which 26 were closed in that year.

### Staff counselling

The ABS continued to provide all staff with access to a staff counselling service using a combination of external providers and internal staff counsellors. Feedback from staff on all service providers indicated a high level of satisfaction.

## Comcare premiums

As a result of active case management and rehabilitation during 1996-97, the Comcare premium for 1997-98 has been reduced to 1.47% of total salary.

### COMCARE WORKERS COMPENSATION PREMIUM RATE (% of wage and salary expenditure)

	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
ABS	1.49	1.36	1.2	1.08	1.61	1.84	1.47
Agency pool average	1.70	1.70	1.56	1.40	1.75	1.60	1.20

## Achievements

Major OHAS activities during 1996-97 included:

- Development and implementation of the "Working Comfortably" program to address Occupational Overuse Syndrome related claims. All staff were given an onsite presentation about working safely and comfortably. Each staff member received an individual pamphlet containing advice about good work practices in a computing environment, and a mouse mat reminding them of correct techniques in using the mouse. Large posters were distributed around the ABS as an ongoing reminder of correct techniques.
- Continuation of workstation inspections for new or relocating staff and inclusion of OHAS modules in internal training courses. 2,442 workstation inspections were carried out, and 2,733 staff attended OHAS modules. An additional 1,150 workstation inspections were carried out in the Population Census data processing centre, and, 1,230 staff employed for the Census attended OHAS training.
- Specific training on managing rehabilitation and workplace injury by 60 Senior Officer staff in Central Office.
- Participation by Senior Executive Service officers from Central and Regional Offices in a "Healthy Futures" program to raise their awareness of the necessity of a balanced and healthy lifestyle.
- Participation by 75% of the NT Office staff, in-house, in Heart Foundation Individual Health Assessments (including blood cholesterol, blood pressure, height and weight as well as ratings for exercise, smoking and stress).
- Workplace assessments for the entire staff of both the Tasmanian and Victorian Offices following relocation to new accommodation.
- Development in the Victorian Office of an encrypted database containing medical information, voluntarily supplied by individual staff members, available to First Aid Officers in an emergency.

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT

## Appendix 6

As required by section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, the following statement is provided on the structure of the ABS and how members of the public can gain access to information held by the Bureau.

### ABS Establishment, Organisation and Functions

Chapter 1, and Appendixes 1 to 3 of this report provide details on the ABS role, structure and functions.

### Powers

The decision-making powers of the ABS and other powers associated with the discharge of its functions affecting members of the public are:

- the power to collect statistics including the powers to request or direct persons to provide information and to enter into premises other than private accommodation for the purpose of collecting statistics;
- the power to initiate prosecutions against persons for failing to supply information if directed; and
- the power to publish statistics and release information.

### Consultative Arrangements

The role of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, which is the ABS's peak consultative body, is described in Chapter 1. Further information about the consultative arrangements operating in the ABS is provided in the Internal and External Scrutiny section of Chapter 1.

### Categories of Documents

*Documents open to public access upon payment of a fee:* the ABS does not hold any of these types of document.

*Documents available for purchase or customarily available free of charge:* see the Client Services, Library Services, Dissemination, and Marketing and Public Relations components, described in detail in Chapter 4. The ABS has a wide range of statistical publications available for sale through its Bookshops.

### Other Documents

*Government and Parliament:* various policy-related documents, ministerial briefings, ministerial correspondence, replies to Parliamentary questions, and tabling documents.

*Conferences, etc.:* agenda papers, submissions, and records of proceedings of internal and external conferences, management meetings and workshops.

*Statistical and statistical service projects:* research, development and evaluation papers, records of consultations with suppliers and users of data, statistical classifications, lists of businesses, etc., maps, data collection, processing and publication manuals and instructions, mailing lists, statistical returns and statistical data holdings.

*Administration and management:* work program and planning documents, finance, staff and establishment papers and manuals, personnel files, files relating to recruitment, selection and promotion of staff, staff development and training papers, office services documents and tenders.

*Privacy:* a record of the extent and nature of the ABS's holdings of personal information, as contained in the *Personal Information Digest* published by the Privacy Commissioner.

*General:* correspondence, papers, etc. filed by subject, manuals or more general subjects, reviews and administrative circulars.

A significant part of the ABS's information holdings is statistical information collected under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. This information is exempt from the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

#### ABS Freedom of Information (FOI) Activities

Comprehensive information on the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* has been supplied to all ABS staff. Matters relating to the operation of the Act within the ABS are the responsibility of the Policy Secretariat Branch in Canberra, and authority for decision making under the Act has been delegated to the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division. Policy Secretariat Branch staff attend meetings of the FOI Practitioners Forum run by the Attorney-General's Department.

The following table provides details of FOI activities during the years 1992-93 to 1996-97 inclusive.

**FOI ACTIVITIES, 1992-93 to 1996-97**  
(number)

	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Requests received for					
Statistical information	2	—	—	1	1
Personal papers	3	—	—	—	1
Administrative documents	3	4	2	2	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Decisions made					
Access granted in full	2	1	2	1	2
Access granted in part	—	1	—	—	—
Request transferred to another agency	—	—	—	—	—
Request withdrawn	3	3	—	1	—
Access refused	—	—	—	—	—
Documents not in existence	1	1	—	1	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Decisions outstanding at end of year	2	—	—	—	—
Review of decisions by principal officer	1	1	—	—	—
Appeals to Administrative Appeals Tribunal	1	1	—	—	—

For cases finalised in 1996-97, the average time taken to respond to requests was 26 days. Implementing the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* during 1996-97 required less than one staff year of effort.

#### Where to get information

##### *Freedom of Information Inquiries*

All inquiries concerning access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* may be directed to the Freedom of Information Contact Officer, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unit 5, Cameron Offices, Chandler Street, Belconnen, ACT, 2616 (PO Box 10, Belconnen, ACT, 2616); telephone (02) 6252 8017.

##### *General Information*

The ABS offers an initial contact point, for all information requests in each ABS office, as listed below:

**Central Office, Canberra**

Telephone: (02) 6252 6627  
Facsimile: (02) 6253 1404  
Mail: PO Box 10  
Belconnen ACT 2616  
Counter: Unit 5, Cameron Offices  
Chandler Street  
Belconnen

**New South Wales**

Telephone: (02) 9268 4611  
Facsimile: (02) 9268 4668  
Mail: GPO Box 796  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Counter: Level 5, St Andrew's House  
Sydney Square  
Sydney

**Victoria**

Telephone: (03) 9615 7755  
Facsimile: (03) 9615 7926  
Mail: GPO Box 2796Y  
Melbourne Vic 3001  
Counter: Level 5, CU Tower  
485 Latrobe Street  
Melbourne

**Queensland**

Telephone: (07) 3222 6351  
Facsimile: (07) 3222 6283  
Mail: GPO Box 9817  
Brisbane QLD 4001  
Counter: 18th Floor  
313 Adelaide Street  
Brisbane

**Western Australia**

Telephone: (08) 9360 5140  
Facsimile: (08) 9360 5955  
Mail: GPO Box K881  
Perth WA 6001  
Counter: Level 16, Exchange Plaza  
2 The Esplanade  
Perth

**South Australia**

Telephone: (08) 8237 7100  
Facsimile: (08) 8237 7566  
Mail: GPO Box 2272  
Adelaide SA 5001  
Counter: 7th Floor  
Commonwealth Centre  
55 Currie Street  
Adelaide

**Tasmania**

Telephone: (03) 6220 5800  
Facsimile: (03) 6220 5995  
Mail: GPO Box 66A  
Hobart Tas 7001  
Counter: Ground Floor  
200 Collins Street  
Hobart

**Australian Capital Territory**

Telephone: (02) 6252 6627  
Facsimile: (02) 6207 0282  
Mail: PO Box 10  
Belconnen ACT 2616  
Counter: 9th Floor, FAI House  
197 London Circuit  
Canberra City

**Northern Territory**

Telephone: (08) 8943 2111  
Facsimile: (08) 8981 1218  
Mail: GPO Box 3796  
Darwin NT 0801  
Counter: 5th Floor  
81 Smith Street,  
Darwin

Listed below are inquiries by Parliamentary Committees with which the ABS was involved during 1996-97, including a summary of significant comments and recommendations relating to the ABS and a summary of action taken by the ABS.

**Senate Economics References Committee:** Inquiry into the impact on industry, employment and the community of telecommunications developments up to the year 2000 and beyond.

The report was tabled in November 1995, and ABS comments on the report for consideration in the Government's response were sought in July 1996. The report recommended that the ABS conduct surveys to ascertain the current use of information technology in households and businesses and community responses to the possible uses of all current and proposed telecommunications, radiocommunications, broadcast and satellite services.

The Government's response to the report advised that the ABS has a program of surveys in place to measure the use of information and telecommunications technologies in households and by businesses. It is expected that these surveys will meet a large proportion of the requirements envisaged by the Committee.

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade:** Inquiry into the implications of Australia's exports of services to Indonesia and Hong Kong.

The report, which was tabled in December 1996, recommended: the re-establishment of a unit within the Department of Industry, Science and Tourism (DIST) to advise the ABS of user requirements for service statistics; that the ABS continue efforts to increase its collection of statistics for the service industries to a level comparable with the data available on the manufacturing, mining and agriculture sectors; that the ABS budget be adjusted to increase resources devoted to the collection of service industry statistics; and that all government departments consider the extent to which relevant service industry statistics can be collected and published.

In its input to the Government's response, the ABS advised that it has taken a major initiative in developing and implementing a strategy for the improvement of statistics on service industries. It does not favour the re-establishment of the DIST advisory unit, as there is already an extensive consultative process in place involving the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, special interest user groups, bilateral consultations with key users, and annual reviews of the ABS's service statistics strategy. In recent years the ABS has increased the resources applied to the service statistics program, primarily by reductions in the proportion of

resources devoted to other fields of statistics. Any further significant increase in the resources devoted to service statistics would need to be considered in the overall budget context. In addition to its own collections, the ABS intends to develop a directory of service statistics and a compendium publication which would include statistics from both ABS and non-ABS sources.

The Government's response to the inquiry has yet to be finalised.

**Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee:**  
Inquiry into the development of a national system of indicators and policy benchmarks to measure the quality of citizenship and community life in Australia.

The report, which was tabled in May 1996, made recommendations about the collection of statistics on human well-being, and the establishment of a national system of indicators and benchmarks capable of measuring performance in this area.

The Government response, which was developed by the ABS in consultation with other relevant agencies, reported that existing processes established by the ABS would ensure the availability of statistics on human well-being to support the development and evaluation of policies and programs in this area. The ABS will also undertake work to ascertain the level and nature of unmet demand for information in the area of social and political participation and assess the priority of this demand in the context of the overall ABS work program. With respect to the development of national indicators and benchmarks of social well-being, the Government considers that these should be developed progressively, initially in the context of the review of Commonwealth/State service provision by the Council of Australian Governments.

There were no other ABS activities in relation to Parliamentary Committee inquiries during 1996-97.



# DOCUMENTS TABLED IN PARLIAMENT

## Appendix 8

### PROPOSALS FOR THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES

In accordance with section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, the following proposals for collection of information for statistical purposes were tabled in both Houses of Parliament during 1996-97.

#### TABLING — PROPOSALS FOR COLLECTION OF INFORMATION FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES, 1996-97

Date tabled(a)	Statistical collection(b)
21 August 1996	1995-96 service industries surveys Collection of prices for the transport and storage, and property and business services industries Survey of inbound tour operators Update of large businesses on the ABS register Information technology surveys Population survey monitor
9 September 1996	Survey of international investment Survey of employment and earnings
18 September 1996	New topics in the monthly population survey: New South Wales — transport patterns and preferences Victoria — leisure participation by Victorians Queensland — survey of safety in the home South Australia — work-related injuries and illnesses Western Australia — household safety devices Tasmania — food safety Australian Capital Territory — shopping preferences
9 October 1996	Survey of international trade in services
14 October 1996	Labour cost index collection
4 November 1996	Survey of education and training 1997 Survey of employer training practices
11 December 1996	Survey of information technology usage by tourism accommodation establishments 1997 time use survey
10 February 1997	Supplementary topic for the monthly population survey: family characteristics survey
4 March 1997	Supplementary topic for the monthly population survey: crime and safety survey
18 March 1997	Supplementary topic for the monthly population survey: rental investors survey Survey of business performance
13 May 1997	Survey of mental health and well-being Survey of not for profit organisations 1995-96 Construction industry survey
26 May 1997	Supplementary topic for the monthly population survey: retrenchment and redundancy
16 June 1997	Survey of motor vehicle use
23 June 1997	1996-97 services industries surveys

(a) If the proposal was tabled on different dates in the two Houses of Parliament, the earlier of the two dates is shown.

(b) Unless otherwise indicated by the title, the statistical collection is a national project.

DISCLOSURE OF LISTS OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES

In accordance with clause 6 of the Statistics Determination (Statutory Rules 1983 No. 19) made under section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, details of the following disclosures of lists of names, addresses and other information to the specified Department or Authority, were tabled in both Houses of Parliament in 1996-97.

**TABLING — DISCLOSURE OF LISTS OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES, 1996-97**

<i>Date tabled</i>	<i>Information released</i>
9 December 1996	Names and addresses of agricultural establishments, to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
4 February 1997	Names and addresses of agricultural establishments, to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
17 June 1997	Names and addresses of agricultural establishments, to the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation

## DISCLOSURE OF UNIDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

## Appendix 9

The Statistics Determination (Statutory Rules 1983 No. 19) made by the Minister under section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, enables the Statistician to disclose certain classes of information. Disclosures of unidentifiable information under clause 7 of the Statistics Determination are shown in the following table.

### STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS — DISCLOSURE OF UNIDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION 1996-97

<u>Survey Title</u>	<u>Survey Date</u>
Census 1% Sample file	1991
Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey	1993
Families in Australia Survey	1992
Household Expenditure Survey	1975-76
Household Expenditure Survey	1984
Household Expenditure Survey	1993-94
Income and Housing Costs Survey	1989-90
Income and Housing Costs Survey	1994-95
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey	1994
Training and Education Survey	1993
Time Use Survey	1992
Population Survey Monitor	May 1996
Population Survey Monitor	September 1996
Population Survey Monitor	November 1996



# ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

## Appendix 10

### AMOUNTS PAID BY, OR ON BEHALF OF, THE ABS TO ADVERTISING AGENCIES, MARKET RESEARCH, POLLING, DIRECT MAIL AND MEDIA ADVERTISING ORGANISATIONS

<i>Name of organisation paid</i>	<i>Amount \$</i>
<b>Advertising</b>	
AIS Media	1 984 565
Neo One	149 058
TMP Worldwide	85 455
SG Communications	34 000
Business Queensland	7 400
Business Sydney	5 000
Australian Conservation Foundation	1 800
Australian Small Business	1 680
Executive Media	1 600
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of WA (Inc.)	1 200
Hassel, Hunt & Moore	800
HMI Publishing	700
Office of Government Information and Advertising	354
<b>Market Research and Polling Organisations</b>	
AGB McNair	127 721



TOPICS SURVEYED DURING 1996-97

	Survey topics
September 1996	Sports participation Children's sports Spectator sports Gambling Employment status Household use of technology Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Attendance at arts festivals Housing issues Art and craft purchases Individual donations Smoke detectors (Vic only)
November 1996	Sports participation Children's sports Spectator sports Gambling Employment status Household use of technology Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Housing issues Individual donations
February 1997	Sports participation Children's sports Spectator sports Gambling Employment status Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Housing issues Art and craft purchases Individual purchases
May 1997	Sports participation Children's sports Spectator sports Gambling Consumer expectations Satisfaction with police services Housing issues Art and craft purchases Individual donations





## PROFESSIONAL PAPERS BY ABS OFFICERS

## Appendix 12

Officers of the ABS prepared the following professional papers which were presented or published between 1 July 1996 and 30 June 1997.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Zia Abbasi   | <i>Informal sector statistics: an Australian perspective.</i> Presented to the ESCAP/ILO/UNSD Workshop on Informal Sector Statistics, Bangkok, 12–16 May 1997, and the Inaugural Meeting of the Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (Delhi Group), New Delhi, 20–22 May 1997.  |
| Charles Aspden,<br>Leanne Johnson,<br>Steven Kennedy,<br>Ken Tallis and<br>Richard Webster | <i>Improving Australia's productivity statistics.</i> Presented to the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) Conference on Service Sector Productivity and the Productivity Paradox, Ottawa, April 11–12, 1997.   |
| Annette Barbetti and<br>John Joisce  | <i>The Australian Input-Output Tables Project: implementation of the Australian and New Zealand Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) and planned future development.</i> Presented to the Australian and New Zealand Regional Science Association Conference, Canberra, September 1996.   |
| Dan Black  | <i>Memorandum of understanding between the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Indonesia (BPS) — a framework for intergovernmental relations.</i> Presented to the workshop 'Northern Territory relations with eastern Indonesia, a framework for cooperation,' Darwin, 13–14 March 1997. |
| Garth Bode   | <i>Development of a labour cost index.</i> Presented to the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Statistical Offices of East Asian Countries, Tokyo, 20–23 May 1997.   |
| Derek Burnell and<br>Cedomir Pilipovic   | <i>Australia's methodology for compiling estimates of capital stock and consumption of fixed capital.</i> Presented to the Capital Stock Conference, Canberra, March 1997.  |
| Mel Butler and<br>Robin Green  | <i>An introduction to the survey of employment and unemployment patterns.</i> Presented to the 1996 Meeting of the Australasian Econometric Society, Perth, July 1996.  |
| Jeff Carlton, Elena<br>Mobilia and Marion<br>McEwin  | <i>Australia.</i> Published in Statistical Portrait of Youth Exclusion: a Siena Group monitoring report, National Institute of Statistics, Rome, 1997.  |
| John Cornish   | <i>A coherent user-oriented strategy for the dissemination of official statistics.</i> Presented to the Fifth Independent Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2–5 July 1996.   |

- John Cornish *The development of a client-focused dissemination strategy for the Australian Bureau of Statistics.* Presented to the Fifth Independent Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2-5 July 1996.
- John Cornish *Ensuring new information and communication technologies are used effectively to disseminate official statistics.* Presented to the Eighth Australasian Information Online & On Disc Conference, Exhibition Centre, Sydney, 21-23 January 1997.
- John Cornish *Creating a client focused Australian Bureau of Statistics.* Presented to the Conference on Public Sector Service Delivery, Canberra, 26-27 May 1997.
- Brian Doyle and Gerry West *Queensland's merchandise trade with APEC member economies: an analysis of recent trends.* Presented to the Third International Conference on Economics in Business and Government: Queensland, Australia and the Asia-Pacific Economy, Brisbane, 18-19 July 1996 and published in *Queensland, Australia and the Asia-Pacific Economy*, edited by Duc-Tho Nguyen, Economic Society of Australia (Queensland), 1996.
- Brian Doyle and Gerry West *The importance of APEC membership: an analysis of recent trends of Queensland's merchandise trade with APEC member economies.* Published in *Queensland Economic Forecasts and Business Review*, Queensland University of Technology, School of Economics and Finance, April 1997.
- Barbara Dunlop *Developments in the Australian national accounts.* Presented to the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Statistical Offices of East Asian Countries, Tokyo, 20-23 May 1997.
- Rob Edwards, Alan Mackay, Steve Crabb and Leong Tan *The combined use of survey and taxation data for business operations and industry performance statistics.* Presented to the Fifth Independent Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2-5 July 1996.
- Rob Edwards *Australia's international trade in services statistics.* Presented to the National Trade Strategy Consultative Process Meeting, Canberra, 8 November 1996.
- Rob Edwards *The CPI: bias, Boskin and BLS.* Presented in support of the review of the Consumer Price Index, 1997.
- Rob Edwards and Keith Woolford *The 13th series review of the Australian CPI.* Presented in support of the review of the Consumer Price Index, 1997.
- Kiri Gaminiratne *Dementia deaths among the elderly in Australia: recent trends 1981-95.* Presented to the Australian Population Association Conference, Adelaide, 3-6 December 1996.

- Lindy Ingham *Proposed treatment of film originals in Australia's national accounts.* Presented to the OECD/UNECE/EUROSTAT Meeting of National Accounts Experts, Paris, 3-6 June 1997.
- Geoff Lee *Synergy between survey computing, data quality and methodological improvement.* Presented to the Second ASC International Conference, Imperial College, London, 11-13 September 1996.
- Merilyn Henden, Fred Wensing, Ken Smith and Mano Georgopoulos *An office management system in Blaise III.* Presented to the Blaise Conference, Paris, 5-7 May 1997.
- Alan Mackay *Agricultural Finance Survey.* Published in The Australian Economic Review, 4th quarter, no. 116, 1996.
- Alan Mackay, Bernard Williams and Glen Malam *The Australian Bureau of Statistics Quarterly Business Expectations Survey.* Presented to the Twenty-fifth Annual Conference of Economists, Canberra, 22-26 September 1996.
- Alan Mackay, John Moody and Nikolas Petrushevski *The changing face of Australian horticulture: a statistical perspective.* Presented to Outlook 97, the National Agricultural and Resource Outlook Conference, Canberra, 4-6 February 1997.
- Alan Mackay, Matthew Freeman, Tamra Nitschke, Malcolm Tuck and Andrew Middleton *Statistical comparison of oil and gas with other industries.* Published in APPEA Journal, v. 37, pt. 1, 1997.
- Maureen K. McDonald *Poverty measurement and poverty statistics in Australia.* Presented to the Seminar on Poverty Statistics, Santiago, May 1997.
- Marion McEwin *An overview of the women's safety survey.* Presented to the Australian Institute of Criminology Second National Outlook Symposium, Canberra, 3-4 March 1997.
- Marion McEwin, Harry Kroon and Maureen K. McDonald *Background, objectives and modus operandi.* Presented to Expert Group on Household Income Statistics, Canberra, 2-4 December 1996.
- Carl Obst *An introduction to tourism satellite accounts.* Presented to the Asia Pacific Tourism Association Conference, Townsville, 14-18 September 1996.
- John Paice, Tetteh Dugbaza and Sue Taylor *Issues in estimating families.* Presented to the Australian Population Association Conference, Adelaide, 3-6 December 1996.

## Australian Bureau of Statistics

- Warren Richter *The ABS Information Warehouse: present and future.* Presented to the Conference on Output Databases, Voorburg, The Netherlands, 20–21 November, 1996.
- Sheridan Roberts and Peter Haines *Alternative methodologies for collecting Australian motor vehicle use statistics.* Presented to the Fourth International Conference on Survey Methods in Transport, Oxford, UK, 8–11 September 1996.
- Russell Rogers *Experimental producer price indexes for services industries — real estate agents' fees.* Presented to the Eleventh Meeting of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, Newport, Wales 16–20 September 1996.
- George Sarossy *Social mobility in a post industrial society: the role of an occupation classification and its required attributes.* Published in the Statistical Journal of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, v. 13, no. 3, 1996.
- George Sarossy *Findings from NATSIS evaluation.* Presented to the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) Workshop, Canberra, 28–29 August 1996.
- Tim Skinner *Strategic directions for population and social statistics.* Presented to the Australian Population Association Conference, Adelaide, 3–6 December 1996.
- Tim Skinner, David Hunter and Edward Vaughan *Developing suitable designators for a multicultural society.* Presented to the Siena Group Meeting 1997: On the way to a Multicultural Society?, Neuchatel, Switzerland, 5–6 June 1997.
- Helen Spong *ABS data sources for researchers.* Published in The Australian Economic Review, 4th quarter, no. 116, 1996.
- John Struik and John Billing *Development and use of a business reporting model.* Presented to the Fifth Independent Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2–5 July 1996 and to the Eleventh Meeting of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, Newport, Wales 16–20 September 1996.
- John Struik, Paul Pentony and Mike Raine *A proposal for a large business survey unit (LBSU).* Presented to the Tenth International Roundtable on Business Survey Frames, Quebec, 7–11 October 1996.
- Siu-Ming Tam *Designing efficient Census operations and effective Census output: the Australian experience.* Presented to the meeting of an Expert Group on the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme, New York, 9–13 September 1996.
- Paul Sullivan *ABS strategy for service statistics.* Presented to the Eleventh Meeting of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, Newport, Wales 16–20 September 1996.

- Paul Sullivan *Activity versus industry data — a response to user needs.* Presented to the Eleventh Meeting of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, Newport, Wales, 16–20 September 1996.
- Sean Thompson, Holman Durie and John Joice *The valuation of forests: some unresolved issues.* Presented to the Fourth Meeting of the London Group, Ottawa, June 1997.
- Dennis Trewin *Measuring inflation.* Presented to the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Statistical Offices of East Asian Countries, Tokyo, 20–23 May 1997.
- Andrew Webster *Families in the 1996 Census of Population and Housing.* Presented to the Australian Population Association Conference, Adelaide, 3–6 December 1996.
- Andrew Webster (with Gordon Carmichael and Peter McDonald of the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU) *Divorce Australian style: a demographic analysis.* Published in Australian National University Research School of Social Sciences Working Papers in Demography, no. 61, 1996 and in Journal of divorce and remarriage, v. 26, no.3/4, 1997.
- Jennie Widdowson *Disability identification: the Australian experience.* Presented to the World Congress of Rehabilitation International, Auckland, NZ, 15–20 September 1996.
- Jennie Widdowson *Explaining disability trends.* Presented to the Australian Population Association Conference, Adelaide, 3–6 December 1996.



## SPECIAL ARTICLES IN EARLIER ABS ANNUAL REPORTS

## Appendix 13

Special articles have been included in most ABS annual reports to present information and views on important longer-term or broad issues affecting the nation's statistical service. A list of the articles in earlier annual reports is given below, showing in brackets after each article title the year of the annual report in which the article appeared and the part of that report where it can be found.

*What the ABS Does* (1975-76; section 2).

*The collection of information* (1976-77; section 2).

*Forward planning in the ABS* (1977-78; section 2).

*Preparations for the 1981 census of population and housing* (1978-79; section 2).

*The accuracy and reliability of estimates of national income and expenditure* (1979-80; section 2).

*Minimising reporting burden* (1980-81; section 2).

*A decade's work program* (1981-82; section 2).

*The ABS program of population surveys* (1983-84; pages 7 to 11, supplemented by appendix 5).

*The ABS program of industry collections* (1984-85; pages 8 to 13, supplemented by appendix 5).

*Dissemination of statistics by the ABS* (1985-86; pages 9 to 14).

*ABS corporate plan* (1986-87; chapter 2).

*Health statistics and the report of the Better Health Commission* (1986-87; chapter 3).

*The role of a national statistical office* (1986-87; appendix 10).

*Statistics and privacy* (1987-88; chapter 3).

*Media liaison for ABS health survey* (1987-88; appendix 12).

*A quart out of a pint pot* (1988-89; chapter 2) — this article examines how the ABS increased significantly the range, timeliness and quality of its statistical products and services over the preceding 13 years, with a static level of resources.

*Household expenditure surveys in Australia: A chronology* (1988–89; appendix 15).

*Complaints to the Australian Press Council* (1988–89; appendix 16).

*The ABS in the marketplace* (1989–90; chapter 2).

*The 1991 Census of Population and Housing* (1990–91; chapter 2, Population Census).

*Security of ABS Data Holdings* (1992–93; chapter 2).

*Reducing Respondent Load* (1992–93; chapter 2).

*The 1996 Census of Population and Housing* (1993–94; chapter 2).

*Retirement of Mr Ian Castles AO, Australian Statistician, 1986–1994* (1994–95; chapter 1).

*National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey* (1994–95; chapter 2).

*Developments in the Australian National Accounts* (1995–96; chapter 2).

*Destruction of Census Forms* (1995–96; chapter 3).



## INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

## Appendix 14

In addition to information contained in the ABS Annual Report, information on the following subjects applicable to the ABS is available on request.

The contact officer for such requests is the Director, Secretariat, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cameron Offices, Belconnen, ACT, 2616 (PO BOX 10, Belconnen, ACT, 2616) — telephone (02) 6252 5760 or facsimile (02)6252 8017

### SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

- Social justice
- Access and Equity
- Status of women
- Equal employment opportunity

### STAFFING MATTERS

- Performance appraisal and performance based pay
- Organisation and People Development
- Interchange program
- Senior executives classified by level, age and length of APS service

### FINANCIAL MATTERS

- Claims and losses
- Purchasing
- Information technology purchasing arrangements
- Payment of accounts
- Consultancy services

### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY

- Fraud control
- Reports by the Auditor-General

### PROPERTY MATTERS

- Property usage
- Capital works management
- Environmental matters and energy usage

### COMMENTS BY THE OMBUDSMAN

There were no comments in 1996-97.

### DECISIONS OF COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

There were no decisions in 1996-97.

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER INVESTIGATIONS

There were no investigations in 1996-97.

SECURITY OF ABS DATA HOLDINGS

PLANNING PROCESSES IN THE ABS

REDUCING PROVIDER LOAD

1

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Appendix 15

### CONTENTS

Certification of Financial Statements

Audit Report

Operating Statement

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Statement of Program Expenses and Revenues

Statement of Cash Flows

Schedule of Commitments

Statement of Transactions by Fund

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statement

STATEMENT BY THE AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN  
AND  
PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING OFFICER

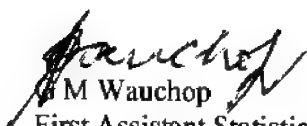
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In our opinion, the attached financial statements present fairly the information required by the Minister for Finance Guidelines for *Financial Statements of Commonwealth Departments*.



W McLennan  
Australian Statistician

12 September 1997



M M Wauchop  
First Assistant Statistician  
Corporate Services Division

12 September 1997



## INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the Treasurer

### Scope

I have audited the financial statements of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended 30 June 1997.

The statements comprise:

- . Statement by the Australian Statistician and Principal Accounting Officer
- . Operating Statement
- . Statement of Assets and Liabilities
- . Statement of Program Expenses and Revenues
- . Statement of Cash Flows
- . Statement of Transactions by Fund
- . Schedule of Commitments, and
- . Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements.

The Australian Statistician and Principal Accounting Officer are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and the information they contain. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the Treasurer.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards, to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. Audit procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, other mandatory professional reporting requirements (Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views) and statutory requirements so as to present a view of the Australian Bureau of Statistics which is consistent with my understanding of its financial position, its operations and its cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

**Audit Opinion**

In accordance with sub-section 51(1) of the *Audit Act 1901*, I now report that in my opinion, the financial statements:

- . are in agreement with the accounts and records kept in accordance with section 40 of the Act
- . are in accordance with the Guidelines for Financial Statements of Commonwealth Departments, and
- . present fairly in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements the information required by the Guidelines, including the results of departmental and administered financial operations and cash flows for the year ended 30 June 1997 and departmental and administered assets and liabilities as at that date.

Australian National Audit Office



David C. McKean  
Executive Director

For the Auditor-General

Canberra

17 September 1997

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**  
**OPERATING STATEMENT**  
for the year ended 30 June 1997

	Notes	1996/97 \$'000	1995/96 \$'000
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>			
<b>Expenses</b>			
Employee expenses	1g,2	185,593	153,552
Other administrative expenses	3	141,337	103,096
<b>Total expenses</b>		<u>326,930</u>	<u>256,648</u>
<b>Revenues from independent sources</b>	1i		
User charges		23,132	25,134
Other revenues from independent sources		465	347
<b>Total revenues from independent sources</b>		<u>23,597</u>	<u>25,481</u>
<b>Net cost of services</b>		<u>303,333</u>	<u>231,167</u>
<b>REVENUES FROM GOVERNMENT</b>			
Appropriations used for:	1i,4		
Ordinary annual services (net appropriations)		298,094	236,822
Other services		1,459	5,297
Resources received free of charge from other departments	1k,5	225	174
<b>Total revenues from government</b>		<u>299,778</u>	<u>242,293</u>
<b>(Excess of net cost of services over revenues from government)/Excess of revenues from government over net cost of services</b>	13	(3,555)	11,126
Accumulated revenues less expenses at beginning of reporting period		4,880	(16,728)
Adjustment due to transfer or revaluation reserve		—	18
Adjustment due to initial adoption of accounting standard	1b	—	10,464
<b>Accumulated revenues less expenses at end of reporting period</b>		<u>1,325</u>	<u>4,880</u>

<b>ADMINISTERED REVENUES AND EXPENSES</b> for the year ended 30 June 1997			
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Other receipts	1i	60	56
<b>Total revenues</b>		<u>60</u>	<u>56</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Net contribution to government</b>		<u>60</u>	<u>56</u>
<b>TRANSFERS</b>			
Cash to Commonwealth Public Account		60	56

The above Operating Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# **AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS** **STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

as at 30 June 1997

	Notes	1996/97 \$'000	1995/96 \$'000
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash	1m	157	634
Receivables	1h,6	1,772	2,418
Inventories	1l	522	555
Other	1n	6,374	5,564
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>8,825</b>	<b>9,171</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	1b,1d,1e,}	39,850	41,531
Intangibles	1f,7,8 }	24,296	22,727
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>64,146</b>	<b>64,258</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>72,971</b>	<b>73,429</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Creditors	9	3,749	4,025
Leases	1f,10	1,263	1,071
Provisions	1g,11	20,139	18,151
Other	1j,12	4,222	3,732
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>29,373</b>	<b>26,979</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Leases	1f,10	11,425	12,324
Provisions	1g,11	30,848	29,246
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>42,273</b>	<b>41,570</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>71,646</b>	<b>68,549</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	13	<b>1,325</b>	<b>4,880</b>

## **ADMINISTERED ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

### **Administered assets**

### **Total administered assets**

### **Administered liabilities**

### **Total administered liabilities**

The above Statement of Assets and Liabilities should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.



**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**  
**STATEMENT OF PROGRAM EXPENSES AND REVENUES**  
for the year ended 30 June 1997

		Statistical Operations Sub-Program		Corporate Services Sub-Program		Total	
	Notes	1996/97 \$'000	1995/96 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000	1995/96 \$'000	1996/97 \$'000	1995/96 \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES							
Expenses							
Employee Expenses	1g, 2	167,034	133,085	18,559	20,467	185,593	153,552
Other Administrative Expenses	3	127,203	89,355	14,134	13,741	141,337	103,096
Total Expenses		294,237	222,440	32,693	34,208	326,930	256,648
Revenues from independent sources							
User charges	1i	23,132	25,134	—	—	23,132	25,134
Other revenues from independent sources		—	—	465	347	465	347
Total revenues from independent sources		23,132	25,134	465	347	23,597	25,481
Net cost of services		271,105	197,306	32,228	33,861	303,333	231,167
REVENUES FROM GOVERNMENT							
Appropriations treated as revenues	4	269,598	209,848	29,955	32,271	299,553	242,119
Resources received free of charge	1k,5	—	—	225	174	225	174
Total revenues from Government		269,598	209,848	30,180	32,445	299,778	242,293
(Excess of net cost of services over revenues from government)/Excess of revenues from government over net cost of services	13	(1,507)	12,542	(2,048)	(1,416)	(3,555)	11,126

**ADMINISTERED REVENUES AND EXPENSES**  
for the year ended 30 June 1997

<b>REVENUES</b>					
Other receipts	1i			60	56
<b>Total revenues</b>				60	56
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Net contribution to government				60	56
<b>TRANSFERS</b>					
Cash to Commonwealth Public Account				60	56

The above Program Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**  
**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
for the year ended 30 June 1997

	Notes	1996/97 \$'000	1995/96 \$'000
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Cash received</b>			
Appropriations		299,553	242,119
Sales of goods and services		25,133	24,191
<b>Total cash received</b>		324,686	266,310
<b>Cash used</b>			
Appropriation expenditure		(306,406)	(236,938)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	14	18,280	29,372
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Cash received</b>			
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment		274	1,064
<b>Cash used</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(17,297)	(28,410)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		(17,023)	(27,346)
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Cash used</b>			
Reduction of lease liability		(1,047)	(787)
Interest payment		(687)	(718)
<b>Total cash used</b>		(1,734)	(1,505)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		(1,734)	(1,505)
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>		(477)	521
add cash at 1 July		634	113
<b>Cash at 30 June</b>		157	634

<b>CASH FLOWS FROM ADMINISTERED TRANSACTIONS</b>			
Inflows:			
Other receipts	1i	63	56
Outflows:			
Refunds of other receipts		(3)	—
<b>Net cash inflows from administered transactions</b>		60	56

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# **AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS** **SCHEDULE OF COMMITMENTS**

for the year ended 30 June 1997

	Notes	Departmental 1996/97 \$'000	1995/96 \$'000
<b>BY TYPE</b>			
CAPITAL COMMITMENTS		—	—
OTHER COMMITMENTS			
Operating leases		<u>81,821</u>	<u>102,319</u>
<b>Total other commitments</b>		<u>81,821</u>	<u>102,319</u>
COMMITMENTS RECEIVABLE		—	—
<b>Net commitments</b>		<u>81,821</u>	<u>102,319</u>
<b>BY MATURITY</b>			
One year or less		13,747	15,130
From one to two years		13,734	14,353
From two to five years		28,562	40,564
Over five years		25,778	32,272
<b>Net commitments</b>		<u>81,821</u>	<u>102,319</u>

The above Schedule of Commitments should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**  
**STATEMENT OF TRANSACTIONS BY FUND**  
for the year ended 30 June 1997

	Notes	1996/97 Budget	1996/97 Actual	1995/96 Actual
		\$	\$	\$
<b>Consolidated Revenue Fund</b>				
RECEIPTS				
Section 35 of the Audit Act 1901		24,000,000	25,791,676	24,855,432
Miscellaneous revenue		50,000	60,207	56,441
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>24,050,000</b>	<b>25,851,883</b>	<b>24,911,873</b>
EXPENDITURE				
Expenditure from annual appropriations:				
Appropriation Act No. 1		301,088,250	{323,885,336	{261,677,257
Appropriation Act No. 3		609,000	{	{
Section 35 receipts		24,000,000	{	{
Appropriation Act No. 2		1,459,000	1,458,696	5,296,798
<b>Total expenditure</b>	4	<b>327,156,250</b>	<b>325,344,032</b>	<b>266,974,055</b>
<b>Trust Fund</b>				
Heads of trust				
Receipts	19	643,000	629,475	1,176,325
Expenditure		643,000	595,309	1,258,753

The above Statement of Transactions by Fund should be read with the accompanying notes.

## **NOTE 1      SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

### **(a) Basis of accounting**

The financial statements are required by section 50 of the *Audit Act 1901* and are a general purpose financial report.

These statements have been prepared in accordance with guidelines titled *Financial Statements of Commonwealth Departments* issued by the Minister for Finance in June 1997 (the 'Guidelines'), to the extent that it was practicable this financial year. Where it was not practicable to adopt the 1997 Guidelines in full, the Bureau continued compliance with the previous (1995) version.

The financial statements are prepared in compliance with the Australian Accounting Standards and Accounting Guidance Releases issued by the Australian Accounting Research Foundation, and having regard to Statements of Accounting Concepts, and the Consensus Views of the Urgent Issues Group.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and are in accordance with historical cost convention, except for certain assets which, as noted, are at valuation. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

### **(b) Depreciable assets**

Non-current assets having a limited useful life (depreciable assets) are stated at cost except as indicated in Note 7. Assets originally costing \$2,000 or more are capitalised in the year of acquisition. Component items purchased separately but which are configured into larger items such as office work stations and personal computer workstations and their software are considered to be depreciable assets if the aggregate cost is \$2,000 or more. Similarly, items of furniture, equipment and plant acquired as part of major refurbishing exercises are capitalised notwithstanding that the costs of certain individual items may be less than \$2,000.

Software developed inhouse is capitalised where the direct development costs (ie before attributing a share of overheads) amount to \$500,000 or more. This accounting policy was adopted in 1994/95 and applies to costs incurred in developing software commencing 1 July 1994. Software developed in earlier years has been valued by the Australian Valuation Office, as at 30 June 1996, and is stated at replacement cost. Details of the valuation are given in Note 7(c) below.

### **(c) Historical statistical data**

Statistical information has accumulated over many years and is stored for reference purposes. The costs of storing and maintaining this data is treated as an operating expense. The data is not treated as an asset because it is not possible to arrive at a cost or other value of such data which can be measured reliably. The revenue generated through the use of such historical data forms an insignificant part of the Bureau's total revenue which is substantially derived from the use of current data.

#### (d) Depreciation

Depreciable assets are written off over their estimated useful lives. Depreciation is calculated using the straight line method which is consistent with the consumption of the service potential of the Bureau's depreciable assets.

The estimated useful lives of the major assets are as follows:

	Life in Years
Computer hardware	3 to 5
Computer software — proprietary	5
Computer software — developed inhouse	8 to 20
Furniture and fittings	10
Plant	10
Office equipment	5

#### (e) Capital work in progress

Capital work in progress represents assets under construction or development and are not depreciated until the year in which the development phase is completed and the asset is operational. Where use of the asset commences after substantial completion of the development phase, but some improvements or enhancements to the system continue to be made, the date of substantial completion is treated as the date of completion and depreciation commences from this date. The costs incurred in making improvements subsequent to this date are written off as incurred.

#### (f) Leases

The Bureau has entered into a number of operating lease agreements for office accommodation. Payments under operating leases are treated as expenses and charged to the Operating Statement.

#### Fitout incentives

During the year the Bureau, as part of an office lease agreement, acquired certain furniture, fittings and equipment. The costs of these items were initially borne by the lessor and are to be repaid by the Bureau as part of future rental payments.

The above fitout items have been treated as subject to finance lease arrangements as defined in Australian Accounting Standard (AAS) 17. Accordingly the Bureau's rights and obligations under these leases, so far as the fitout items are concerned, are initially recognised as assets and liabilities equal in amount to the present value of the minimum lease payments. The fitout assets are disclosed as plant, equipment, furniture and fittings and computer hardware under lease and are amortised to the operating statement over the period during which the Bureau is expected to benefit from the use of the leased assets. Minimum lease payments are allocated between interest expense and reduction of the lease liability, according to the interest rate implicit in the lease.

## **(g) Employee entitlements**

Employee entitlements include entitlements to salaries, long service leave, recreation leave, leave bonus and superannuation.

### **Leave**

Long service leave is recognised on a pro-rata basis in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date. Liabilities in respect of these entitlements are assessed having regard to such factors as separation rates and length of service. In 1996/97 the Bureau has estimated the liability for long service leave using the parameters determined by the Australian Government Actuary and recommended by the Department of Finance for the Australian Public Service as a whole. Thus the Bureau's liability for long service leave is estimated at 95% of the average of the liabilities

- for all employees with 3 or more years of completed service, and
- for all employees with 4 or more years of completed service.

The determination of current and non-current portions is based on past history of payments.

### **Superannuation**

Staff of the Bureau contribute to the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme and the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme. Employer contributions in relation to these schemes have been expensed in these financial statements.

## **(h) Receivables**

A provision is made for any doubtful debts based on a review of all outstanding accounts as at year end. Bad debts are written off during the year in which they are identified.

## **(i) Revenue**

User charges include revenue from the sale of publications and other products and the provision of statistical services. Other revenue includes profit from the sale or disposal of assets, contributions from officers towards the provision of communication services and motor vehicles and contributions and fees associated with conferences and seminars. Revenues controlled by the Bureau are recognised as departmental revenue. Other revenues are classified as administered.

## **(j) Revenue in advance**

Revenue in advance includes revenue for subscriptions for statistical publications and for consultancies and surveys.

## **(k) Resources received free of charge**

Resources received free of charge are recognised as revenue where the amounts can be reliably measured. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense.

## **(l) Inventories**

Inventories comprise significant items held for resale and are stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

Consumable stores and supplies are considered to be immaterial and are not recognised as inventories.

## **(m) Cash**

Cash includes cash at bank and cash on hand.

## **(n) Other current assets**

Other current assets includes accrued income and prepayments for telephones, maintenance contracts, office rent, rights to childcare places at Bluebell Childcare Centre, security and subscriptions.

## **(o) Allocation of costs and revenues and assets and liabilities to departmental programs**

Direct costs such as salaries, overtime, information technology and travel have been allocated against the sub-program which incurred these costs. Corporate overheads have been allocated to sub-programs on bases which reflect the benefits derived by the programs.

Sundry revenue received has been allocated to the Corporate Services sub-program and revenue associated with statistical products and services has been allocated to the Statistical Operations sub-program. Resources received free of charge have been allocated to both sub-programs on the basis of benefits received by the respective sub-programs.

Assets and liabilities have not been allocated to sub-programs. Sub-programs share resources in such a way that, until a methodology for allocation of resources can be delineated, any division of assets and liabilities may be misleading.

## **(p) Insurance**

In accordance with Government policy, assets are not insured, and losses are expensed as they are incurred.

## **(q) Taxation**

The Bureau's activities are exempt from all forms of taxation except Fringe Benefits Tax.



**(r) Rounding**

Amounts have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 except in relation to the following items:

- Act of grace payments, waivers and write-offs,
- Remuneration of executives, and
- Statement of Transactions by Fund

**(s) Corresponding amounts**

Certain corresponding amounts have been reclassified in order to conform with the current year's presentation.

**NOTE 2 EMPLOYEE EXPENSES**

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Salaries and related items paid during the year	158,675	131,185
Superannuation	26,203	22,314
Increase/(decrease) in provisions for employee entitlements (excluding salaries)	3,419	3,438
Increase/(decrease) in accruals	839	(9)
	189,136	156,928
Less: Amounts capitalised in respect of software developed inhouse	3,543	3,376
Total employee expenses	185,593	153,552

**NOTE 3 OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES**

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Depreciation	14,746	10,510
Amortisation of leased assets and prepayments	1,608	1,522
Finance charges relating to lease liability (re office fitout)	687	718
Property expenses	20,589	26,406
Interviewers' wages and expenses	53,459	14,723
Office requisites, telephone and postage	8,809	7,638
Other	41,439	41,579
Total	141,337	103,096

The 1996/97 expense excludes \$0.5 million (1995/96: \$0.5 million) capitalised in respect of software developed inhouse.

## NOTE 4 REVENUES FROM GOVERNMENT — APPROPRIATIONS

### (a) Summary

	1996/97 Appropriation	1996/97 Expenditure	1995/96 Expenditure
	\$	\$	\$
<b>Appropriation Act 1 and 3</b>			
<b>Div 671 — Australian Bureau of Statistics</b>			
1. Running Costs	301,426,000	323,621,858	261,670,810
S35 Receipts deemed appropriated	25,791,676		
2. Other services			
01. Compensation and legal expenses	85,000	263,478	6,447
02. Advance to the Minister for Finance	186,250		
<b>Total Appropriation Act 1 and 3</b>	<b>327,488,926</b>	<b>323,885,336</b>	<b>261,677,257</b>
<b>Appropriation Act 2 and 4</b>			
<b>Div 979 — Australian Bureau of Statistics</b>			
1. Capital Works and Services			
01. Plant and equipment	1,459,000	1,458,696	5,296,798
02. Construction of facilities			
<b>Total Appropriation Act 2 and 4</b>	<b>1,459,000</b>	<b>1,458,696</b>	<b>5,296,798</b>

### (b) Carryover from 1995–96 into 1996–97 and borrowings from future periods

An amount of \$1.1 million was carried over from 1995/96 into 1996/97 and was included in the 1996/97 appropriation. This arose primarily because of revenue received in advance for work which commenced in 1995/96 and was not concluded until 1996/97. Carryovers and borrowings are permitted under the Department of Finance's Running Costs arrangements.

**NOTE 5 RESOURCES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE**

The following resources received free of charge have been recognised in the Operating Statement.

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Australian National Audit Office — audit of financial statements	90	90
Department of Finance — provision of accounting, budgeting and salary services	135	84
Total resources received free of charge	<u>225</u>	<u>174</u>

The following services received free of charge are not recognised in the Operating Statement as estimates of the costs were not able to be provided by the service provider:

- Department of Administrative Services — arranging standard purchasing contracts
- Department of Industrial Relations — provision of advice and representation on industrial relations matters

**NOTE 6 RECEIVABLES**

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Trade debtors	1,842	2,508
Less: provision for doubtful debts	70	90
Total receivables	<u>1,772</u>	<u>2,418</u>

**Age Analysis:**

Not overdue (less than 30 days)	1,173	1,441
Overdue		
— less than 30 days	426	624
— between 30 and 60 days	79	94
— more than 60 days	164	349
Total receivables	<u>1,842</u>	<u>2,508</u>

Those receivables have been categorised as follows:

From:	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Commonwealth Departments	697	794
Entities controlled by the Commonwealth	86	123
Trade	1,059	1,591
Total receivables	1,842	2,508

## NOTE 7 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

### (a) Summary

Cost or valuation	Plant, equipment, furniture & fittings \$'000	Computer hardware \$'000	Intangible \$'000	Capital work in progress \$'000	Total \$'000
As at 1 July 1996	36,346	45,371	21,352	7,604	110,673
Additions:					
Finance lease	340	—	—	—	340
Adjustment	(601)	16	4	—	(581)
Reclassification	—	(70)	70	(421)	(421)
Other	2,923	8,692	2,028	4,075	17,718
Disposals	(1,353)	(6,590)	(20)	—	(7,963)
As at 30 June 1997	37,655	47,419	23,434	11,258	119,766
Accumulated depreciation/amortisation					
As at 1 July 1996	7,736	32,450	6,229	—	46,415
Eliminated on disposals	(616)	(6,479)	(12)	—	(7,107)
Reclassification	—	(12)	12	—	0
Charge for the year	3,788	8,357	4,167	—	16,312
As at 30 June 1997	10,908	34,316	10,396	—	55,620
Net book value					
As at 30 June 1997	26,747	13,103	13,038	11,258	64,146
As at 30 June 1996	28,610	12,921	15,123	7,604	64,258

**(b) Assets under lease**

Included in the above are assets under lease as follows:

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
<b>Plant, equipment, furniture and fittings under lease</b>		
At cost	13,848	13,507
Less accumulated amortisation	3,806	2,354
Net book value	<u>10,042</u>	<u>11,153</u>
<b>Computer hardware under lease</b>		
At cost	752	752
Less accumulated amortisation	341	227
Net book value	<u>411</u>	<u>525</u>
Total assets under lease	<u><u>10,453</u></u>	<u><u>11,678</u></u>

**(c) Assets at valuation**

Certain internally developed computer software has been valued by the Australian Valuation Office as at 30 June 1996, and is included in intangibles at replacement cost as follows:

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
<b>Internally generated software</b>		
At replacement cost	27,921	27,921
Accumulated depreciation	19,805	17,457
Net book value	<u>8,116</u>	<u>10,464</u>

A telelift system was revalued by the Australian Valuation Office in 1993, and is included in plant, equipment, furniture and fittings at replacement cost as follows:

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
<b>Telelift system</b>		
At independent valuation	1,700	1,700
Accumulated depreciation	708	510
Net book value	<u>992</u>	<u>1,190</u>

## NOTE 8 CAPITAL WORK IN PROGRESS

Capital work in progress comprises software being developed inhouse to facilitate the Bureau's statistical operations. As explained in note 1(b), costs incurred in developing software since 1 July 1994 have been capitalised and are shown below.

	<b>Cost capitalised \$'000</b>	<b>Estimated final cost \$'000</b>
Business register	<b>3,238</b>	4,080
ABS database	<b>3,857</b>	5,015
Household survey	<b>2,134</b>	2,600
Prices system	<b>1,248</b>	1,928
Labour cost index	<b>780</b>	1,164
Total capital work in progress	<b>11,257</b>	14,787

## NOTE 9 CREDITORS

	<b>1997 \$'000</b>	<b>1996 \$'000</b>
Accrued salaries	<b>1,817</b>	1,078
Accrued superannuation	<b>280</b>	183
Statistical services for State Governments	<b>467</b>	534
Other creditors	<b>1,185</b>	2,230
Total creditors	<b>3,749</b>	4,025

**NOTE 10 FINANCE LEASES**

At the reporting date, the Bureau had the following obligations under finance leases (the sum of which is recognised as a liability after deduction of future finance lease charges included in the obligation):

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Not later than one year	1,923	1,767
Later than one year but not later than two years	2,107	1,921
Later than two years but not later than five years	6,462	6,753
Later than five years	5,284	6,560
Minimum lease payments	15,776	17,001
Deduct: future finance charges	3,088	3,606
Total finance lease liability	<u>12,688</u>	<u>13,395</u>
Classified as		
Current	1,263	1,071
Non-current	11,425	12,324
Lease liability	<u>12,688</u>	<u>13,395</u>

**NOTE 11 PROVISIONS**

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
<b>Current</b>		
Recreation Leave	17,245	14,907
Recreation Leave Bonus	282	1,040
Long Service Leave	2,437	2,204
Voluntary Redundancies	115	—
Performance Based Pay	60	—
Total current provisions	<u>20,139</u>	<u>18,151</u>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Long Service Leave	30,279	28,848
Other	569	399
Total non-current provisions	<u>30,848</u>	<u>29,247</u>

## NOTE 12 OTHER LIABILITIES

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Receipts in advance	4,222	3,732
Total other liabilities	4,222	3,732

## NOTE 13 NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)

	Accumulated Operating Results \$'000
Balance at the beginning of the year	4,880
Excess of net cost of services over revenues from government for the year	3,555
Balance at the end of the year	1,325

## NOTE 14 CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

The following is a reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash provided by operating activities.

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Net Cost of services — gain/(loss)	(303,333)	(231,167)
Depreciation/Amortisation	16,354	12,032
(Gain)/loss on disposal of non current assets	197	(100)
Adjustment prior year asset balances	924	....
Interest on finance lease	687	718
Resources received free of charge	225	174
Expenses funded by finance lease/(discounts received)	—	(62)
Revenue from govt	299,553	242,119
Change in assets and liabilities		
Decrease (increase) in receivables	666	(846)
Decrease (increase) in inventories	33	179
Decrease (increase) in other assets	(810)	1,966
Increase (decrease) in creditors	(276)	715
Increase (decrease) in provisions	3,590	3,658
Increase (decrease) in provisions for doubtful debts	(20)	40
Increase (decrease) in other liabilities	490	(54)
Net cash provided by operating activities	18,280	29,372



**NOTE 15 NON-CASH FINANCING AND INVESTING ACTIVITIES**

As explained in note 1(f), the Bureau acquired certain assets in connection with the fitout of NSW, WA, QLD and TAS offices under finance lease arrangements. These non-cash financing and investing activities may be summarised as follows:

	1997 \$'000	1996 \$'000
Balance at 1 July	13,395	10,723
Assets acquired	340	3,521
Expenses written off/(Discounts received)	—	(62)
Repaid during the year	(1,047)	(787)
Total finance lease liability	<u>12,688</u>	<u>13,395</u>

**NOTE 16 EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION****(a) Fixed remuneration**

	1997 No. of Executives	1996 No. of Executives
\$100,000 to \$110,000	—	1
\$110,000 to \$120,000	25	25
\$130,000 to \$140,000	6	6
\$140,000 to \$150,000	—	—
\$150,000 to \$160,000	1	—
\$160,000 to \$170,000	1	—
\$210,000 to \$220,000	—	1
\$220,000 to \$230,000	1	—

**(b) Total fixed remuneration and performance pay received/receivable by all executive officers**

Total fixed remuneration	\$4,405,024	\$4,204,426
Performance pay	\$116,174	—

# NOTE 17 ACT OF GRACE PAYMENTS, WAIVERS AND AMOUNTS WRITTEN OFF

## (a) Act of grace payments

There were no Act of Grace payments made in accordance with s.34A, *Audit Act 1901*.

## (b) Waivers of rights to payments

The following table indicates the waiver of amounts due to the Commonwealth made during the financial year 1996/97 under Section 70C(2) of the *Audit Act 1901*.

No. of waived rights to payments of moneys	1997 \$	1996 \$
Nil (1996 — 1))	—	176.76

## (c) Amounts written off

The following details are furnished in relation to amounts written off during the 1996/97 financial year under sub-section 70C(1) of the *Audit Act 1901*.

Category	1997 \$	1996 \$
Losses or deficiencies of public moneys	7,351	236
Irrecoverable amounts of revenue	—	—
Irrecoverable debts and overpayments	—	900
Amounts of revenue, debts or overpayments, the recovery of which would, in the opinion of the Minister, be uneconomical	26,631	17,220
Lost, deficient, condemned, unserviceable or obsolete stores	—	22,489
Total	33,982	40,845

**(d) Losses and deficiencies in public moneys and other property**

The following action was taken during the financial year 1996/97 under Part XIA of the *Audit Act 1901*.

	Total number	Total amount \$	Number where officer judged liable	Total assessed liability \$	Number where officer not held liable	Number pending action
Public moneys						
Losses	7	7,027	—	—	6	1
Deficiencies	3	64	—	—	3	—
Property						
Losses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Destruction	—	—	—	—	—	—
Damage	2	650	—	—	2	—

**NOTE 18 CONTINGENCIES**

The Bureau has contingent liabilities pending the finalisation of legal proceedings.

**NOTE 19 TRUST FUNDS****(a) Comcare Trust Fund**

Legal Authority — Section 60 *Audit Act 1901*

Purpose — To process incapacity payments from Comcare for loss of salary due to compensable conditions under Section 19 of *CERC Act 1988*.

	1996-97 Budget \$	1996-97 Expenditure \$	1995-96 Expenditure \$
Opening Balance	29,080	29,080	111,995
Receipts	641,000	623,895	622,596
Expenditure	(641,000)	(593,895)	(705,511)
Closing Balance	29,080	59,080	29,080

**(b) Other trust funds**

Legal Authority — Section 60, *Audit Act 1901*

Purpose — For the receipt of moneys temporarily held in trust for other persons, and for moneys received without sufficient information for crediting to the correct head of revenue at time of receipt.

	1996-97 Budget \$	1996-97 Expenditure \$	1995-96 Expenditure \$
Opening Balance	2,902	2,902	2,415
Receipts	2,000	5,580	553,729
Expenditure	(2,000)	(1,414)	(553,242)
Closing Balance	2,902	7,068	2,902

## ESTIMATES OF COST BY COMPONENT

## Appendix 16

The following table shows the total operating expenses for the ABS program with an estimated dissection by program component. The table also shows an estimate of the full cost of each statistical component.

The cost allocations have been compiled on the following basis:

- Direct and overhead costs comprise all expenses directly attributable to each component (such as salaries, overtime, travel, information technology, etc.) plus an estimated distribution of major corporate service costs (such as accommodation, telephones, etc.). To the extent practicable, overhead costs are allocated on the basis of estimated usage.
- Full cost for each statistical component comprises direct and overhead costs for the component plus an estimate of costs for services received from other components less an estimate of the cost of services provided to other components. To the extent practicable, service costs are allocated on the basis of estimated usage.

**ESTIMATES OF COST BY COMPONENT, 1996-97**  
(\$'000)

<i>Components</i>	<i>Direct &amp; overhead costs</i>	<i>Cost of services received</i>	<i>Cost of services provided</i>	<i>Statistical Components FULL COST</i>	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A+B-C)	%(a)
<b>STATISTICAL OPERATIONS</b>					
Client Services	9 736	3 313	9 365	3 684	1.6
Library Services	2 297	535	2 832	..	..
Dissemination	8 834	2 130	10 965	..	..
Marketing and Public Relations	5 016	1 163	6 179	..	..
Data Management Coordination	732	230	228	734	0.3
National Accounts	4 987	4 672	1 407	8 252	3.5
International Accounts	6 796	4 259	..	11 055	4.7
International Trade	3 137	1 723	..	4 860	2.1
Prices	7 923	5 503	..	13 426	5.7
Financial Accounts	2 258	1 377	..	3 635	1.6
Public Sector Accounts	5 061	3 033	..	8 094	3.5
Agriculture	5 067	5 472	..	10 539	4.5
Mining	836	840	..	1 676	0.7
Manufacturing	4 999	5 423	1 286	9 136	3.9
Construction	4 825	2 930	..	7 755	3.3
Transport	3 525	2 399	..	5 924	2.5
Tourism	1 372	1 201	..	2 573	1.1
Service Industry	7 333	7 626	..	14 959	6.4
Economy Wide Statistics	3 065	5 616	..	8 681	3.7
Business Statistics	3 693	5 857	..	9 550	4.1
Small Business	1 156	810	..	1 966	0.8
Science and Technology	966	761	..	1 727	0.7
Environment	1 074	742	..	1 816	0.8
Classification	886	214	1 100	..	..
Standards and Methods	3 972	928	4 900	..	..
Business Register	5 540	3 235	8 281	494	0.2
SPEED	1 208	137	1 345	..	..
Geography	1 305	497	493	1 309	0.6
Census	92 419	110 765	109 803	93 381	(a)—
Demography	3 579	4 211	..	7 790	3.3
National Centres for Crime, Sport and Recreation, and Indigenous Statistics	7 224	7 198	..	14 422	6.2
Labour	14 714	39 449	693	53 470	22.9
Social Statistics	6 879	8 157	..	15 036	6.4
Population Surveys	34 023	7 326	40 631	718	0.3
Econometric & Time Series Analyses	2 010	981	973	2 018	0.9
Mathematical Statistics	5 429	1 681	6 719	391	0.2

For footnotes see end of table.

...continued

**ESTIMATES OF COST BY COMPONENT, 1996-97**  
 (\$'000) — *continued*

<i>Components</i>	<i>Direct &amp; overhead costs</i>	<i>Cost of services received</i>	<i>Cost of services provided</i>	<i>Statistical Components FULL COST</i>	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A+B-C)	%(a)
<b>STATISTICAL OPERATIONS — (continued)</b>					
Statistical Services and User Liaison	4 594	3 265	..	7 859	3.4
Data Management	2 484	255	2 739	..	..
Information Technology Bureau(b)	0	2 526	2 526	..	..
Technology Application(b)	3 424	2 946	6 370	..	..
Technology Research	934	149	1 082	..	..
Economic Statistics Group Support	4 517	858	5 375	..	..
Population Statistics Group Support	2 009	121	2 130	..	..
Methodology Division Business Office	425	14	439	..	..
Information Services Division Business Office	1 225	92	1 317	..	..
Technology Services Division Support	716	58	774	..	..
<i>Sub-program total</i>	294 204	262 678	229 952	326 930	—
<i>Sub-program excluding Census(a)</i>	201 785	151 913	120 149	233 549	100
<b>CORPORATE SERVICES</b>					
Executive	5 297	885	6 182	..	—
Human Resource Management	3 463	833	4 296	..	—
Organisation and People Development	6 102	1 227	7 330	..	—
Financial Resources Management	8 634	2 114	10 747	..	—
Office Services	5 638	1 226	6 863	..	—
Secretariat	1 100	281	1 381	..	—
International Relations Unit	447	86	533	..	—
Internal Audit	72	26	98	..	—
Corporate Services Division Support	1 973	191	2 165	..	—
<i>Sub-program total</i>	32 726	6 869	39 595	..	—
<b>PROGRAM TOTAL</b>	<b>326 930</b>	<b>269 547</b>	<b>269 547</b>	<b>326 930</b>	<b>—</b>

(a) The cost of the Population Census component varies so widely over the 5 yearly Census cycle that it distorts the percentages applying to other statistical components. Accordingly, the full cost of the Population Census has been excluded in the calculation of the share of costs attributable to other components. (b) The costs of this component were 'recovered' from other components through an internal cost recovery process. The amount shown against this component represents the residual costs allocated to the component which were not subject to cost recovery.





# **ABS PROGRESS DURING 1996-97 ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SMALL BUSINESS DEREGULATION TASK FORCE**

## **Appendix 17**

This appendix lists the recommendations relating to statistics made by the Small Business Deregulation Task Force (published in *Time for Business*<sup>1</sup>), the Government's response to these recommendations (published in *More Time for Business*<sup>2</sup>), and the progress made by the ABS on the recommendations during 1996-97.

### **Task Force Recommendation 19: Australian Bureau of Statistics' reporting burden**

- (a) *That the Australian Bureau of Statistics seek its proposed 20% reduction in the reporting burden during 1996-97 as far as is possible through process efficiencies. Any reductions in data content should be subject to consultation with affected small businesses, where relevant.*
- (b) *That the Australian Bureau of Statistics further reduce the reporting burden where this can be done without jeopardising the integrity of collections, and publish annually measures of the burden it places on small business.*
- (c) *That all public and business organisations collecting statistics review and reduce their collections where possible; and private sector collectors develop a code of conduct to minimise the burden on small business.*

### **Government Response**

#### **Agreed.**

- (a) A 20% reduction in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reporting load on small business will be implemented during 1996-97. It is not possible to achieve all of the reduction through process efficiencies. The frequency or content of some collections will be reduced. Small business representatives have been consulted on the reductions and their views have been taken into account.
- (b) The ABS will pursue, in consultation with small business representatives, further reductions in reporting load concentrating on process efficiencies and deletion of survey content no longer justified. To assist in this work, the ABS has established a database to provide information on the reporting load imposed on business with the load on small business separately identified.

The ABS will continue to publish in its Annual Report information on the reporting load that it imposes and steps taken to reduce this load.

- (c) The ABS will develop in conjunction with other agencies, by July 1997, a Code of Conduct for business collections. It will make this Code available to other organisations conducting collections of business information and to the general public, possibly by way of a published Information Paper.

*ABS progress in 1996-97*

- (a) The ABS reporting load on small business fell by 17% during 1996-97. The target reduction of 20% was not reached, because, at the request of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the ABS agreed to defer the introduction of changes to the Survey of Tourist Accommodation pending further user consultation. (There was substantial lobbying of the Government on the proposed changes to the survey.) The ABS is committed to the 20% reduction in reporting load and the remainder of the target will be met during 1997-98.
- (b) Other means of reducing provider load are being pursued. The size of some collections will be reduced, simpler forms have been developed for the Economic Activity Survey, and the use of taxation data in lieu of directly collected data is close to fruition.
- (c) A draft Code of Conduct was prepared during 1996-97.

Task Force Recommendation 20: Small business representation on Australian Bureau of Statistics' consultative committees

*That small business representation be increased on all relevant statistical consultative committees of the Australian Bureau of Statistics by 1 July 1997 and that provider loads be progressively assessed.*

*Government Response*

Agreed.

The Treasurer is expected to appoint a representative of small business to the Australian Statistics Advisory Council in the near future.

Small business is now represented on all other relevant ABS consultative committees and new committees have been established in fields where small business has a particular interest (e.g. tourism). At least once a year, as a specific agenda item, each committee will consider the issue of reporting load imposed on business.

*ABS progress in 1996-97*

The Treasurer recently appointed a small business representative to the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, and small business is now represented on all other relevant ABS consultative committees.

**Task Force Recommendation 21: Extension of Australian Bureau of Statistics' user-pays principle**

*That the Australian Bureau of Statistics extend the application of the user-pays principle to cover non-core activities of the ABS commencing in 1997-98.*

**Government Response**

Agreed in principle.

The ABS has been extending the application of 'user-pays' for several years and revenue has increased from \$1.1 million in 1990-91 to \$9.4 million in 1995-96. It will continue to seek opportunities for extending this in future. For example, in 1997 it will be seeking funding for the monthly manufacturing production collections and the freight movement survey. It will continue to note in its Annual Report the extent to which survey activity is user funded.

**ABS progress in 1996-97**

During 1996-97, the ABS extended the user-pays principle to its monthly manufacturing production collections. It will extend the principle into other areas as opportunities arise.

**Task Force Recommendation 22: Central clearance for statistical collections**

*That statistical collections affecting 50 or more businesses and run by, or on behalf of, all Commonwealth Government departments and agencies be subject to a central clearance process from 1 July 1997. A progress report on incorporating State and Territory statistical collections be included on the agenda for the next National Small Business Summit.*

**Government Response**

Agreed in principle.

It is proposed that a clearing process for Commonwealth Government collections will be conducted along the lines suggested by the Task Force in its report.

The ABS will develop a specific proposal in conjunction with other agencies on how the survey clearance proposal should work which will be presented to the Government for consideration by the end of April 1997. It is proposed that the clearing process will be progressively implemented (starting with the largest collections) from 1 July 1997.

The Australian Statistician and relevant State and Territory officials will provide a report on the options for State and Territory participation in the clearance process for consideration at the next National Small Business Summit scheduled for mid-1997.

ABS progress in 1996-97

- (a) During 1996-97, the ABS made significant progress in developing a specific proposal for the clearance process. It developed evaluation criteria and investigated a wide range of issues associated with the process. It began the process of developing systems and recruiting the necessary people to undertake the function.
- (b) The ABS contacted all States and Territories on options for their participation in the clearance process. Responses were consolidated, and a report was provided to the National Small Business Summit held on 27 June 1997.

Task Force Recommendation 23: Design and timing of statistical collections

*That the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other collecting agencies improve the explanations for, design and the timing of statistical collections from 1997-98 onwards.*

Government Response

Agreed.

The ABS will continue to improve the explanatory information provided to participants in statistical collections.

Improvements will be made progressively from 1997-98 onwards.

The ABS has recently increased the size of its form design unit which will have a key role in improving explanatory information. An important input into this process will be the findings of a recent ABS study into business attitudes to interactions with ABS staff.

ABS progress in 1996-97

As a result of focus group meetings with over 80 small businesses, the ABS has identified ways in which it can improve the explanatory information provided to participants in statistical collections. Improvements will be made during 1997-98.

Task Force Recommendation 24: Marketing of statistical products

*That the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other statistical collection agencies immediately increase the marketing of statistical products and the promotion of the wider benefits of statistical collections.*

Government Response

Agreed.

The ABS will research which products are of particular interest to small businesses and develop, market and promote the identified products.

This recommendation will be implemented immediately.

## ABS progress in 1996-97

The ABS undertook a review of its general approach to promoting products and services to the market place, including small businesses. The review looked at how to improve general community awareness of its capability and the benefits that organisations can gain from the use of ABS services, through both its new promotional approaches and other public relations activities. In addition, the ABS commenced a specific examination of more effective ways to promote and deliver its services to the business sector.

## Task Force Recommendation 25: Provision of statistics to small businesses

*That small businesses included in statistical surveys be provided free of charge with relevant and timely statistics based on the data they contribute from 1 July 1997.*

## Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The ABS will hold focus groups with small businesses to determine how it can provide better feedback to businesses involved in its statistical collections.

The focus groups will be held in the first part of 1997. Improved arrangements will be in place from 1 July 1997.

## ABS progress in 1996-97

Focus group discussions were held with over 80 small businesses early in 1997. No "best" means of providing feedback was identified, as the nature of the feedback sought by businesses varied from collection to collection. However, a number of better practices were identified, which will be implemented.

## Task Force Recommendation 43: Single entry point for information collection

(a) *That a mechanism for collecting the most commonly sought information from small business and distributing it within government through a single entry point be established by 1 July 1998.*

(b) *That a unique business number be developed to facilitate the development of the entry point and streamlined registration processes.*

## Government response

Agreed.

Governments recognise the difficulties small businesses face in dealing with multiple government agencies and the three tiers of government. The Commonwealth Government proposes to take a staged approach to working towards the Task Force objective of a single entry point to government. As a first step the Government will introduce by 1 July 1998 a single process for the initial registration requirements of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), the Australian Securities Commission

(ASC), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Insurance and Superannuation Commission (ISC). Depending on negotiations with the States and Territories the project could link with some State agencies such as business name and payroll tax authorities. The Commonwealth project will as far as practicable be integrated with State-based single entry point projects. The establishment of a unique business number will be considered as part of the implementation of the project.

The involvement of State, Territory and local government information collection processes will be needed if the full potential benefits to small business are to be realised. A meeting of Small Business Ministers and the Australian Local Government Association on 16 December 1996 agreed that a single entry point involving all jurisdictions offered significant benefits to small business and administrative efficiencies and participants agreed to work within their jurisdictions to explore options for further consideration.

Collaborative work will continue under the guidance of the Council of Australian Governments Senior Officials group. The ATO is participating on a pilot basis in the Victorian Electronic Service Delivery Project, and the Commonwealth will explore the possibilities for the ASC, ABS and ISC to also participate.

The Department of Industry, Science and Tourism will coordinate a project team including officers from the ATO, ASC, ABS, ISC, Australian Customs Service, Department of Administrative Services, Treasury and relevant State and Territory representatives to develop an overall implementation strategy for the single entry point project, including the establishment of a unique business number, with a view to firm decisions being made by September 1997 on extending the project to encompass other agencies and more complex information collection such as regular annual returns. The project team will be responsible for continuing consultations and negotiations with State and Territory bodies with a view to establishing common collection processes that could involve all tiers of government. It will also have the task of preparing a detailed business case for the larger project and developing strategies for handling policy, legal, technical and administrative issues. System development for the first stage of the project will be put out to tender to the public and private sectors by July 1997.

The project team will be jointly oversighted by the Minister for Small Business and Consumer Affairs and the Assistant Treasurer. A report on progress will be provided to the next National Small Business Ministers Summit.

#### *ABS progress in 1996-97*

An inter-departmental task force, which included ABS representation, was established to investigate the options for introducing a single process for the initial registration requirements of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), the Australian Securities Commission, the Insurance and Superannuation Commission, and the ABS. (Currently, the ABS uses information collected by the ATO as the principal source of information for its Business Register.)

<sup>1</sup> *Time for Business*, Report by the Small Business Deregulation Task Force, November 1996

<sup>2</sup> *More Time for Business*, Statement by the Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP, 24 March 1997, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1997.





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